

Do you know a hurt me:

- when you turn down the corner of my leaves
- and break my back,
- or mark me with a pencil,
- and handle me with unwashed hands?

I want to go back to the Library unhurt to be the
friend of some other boy or girl.

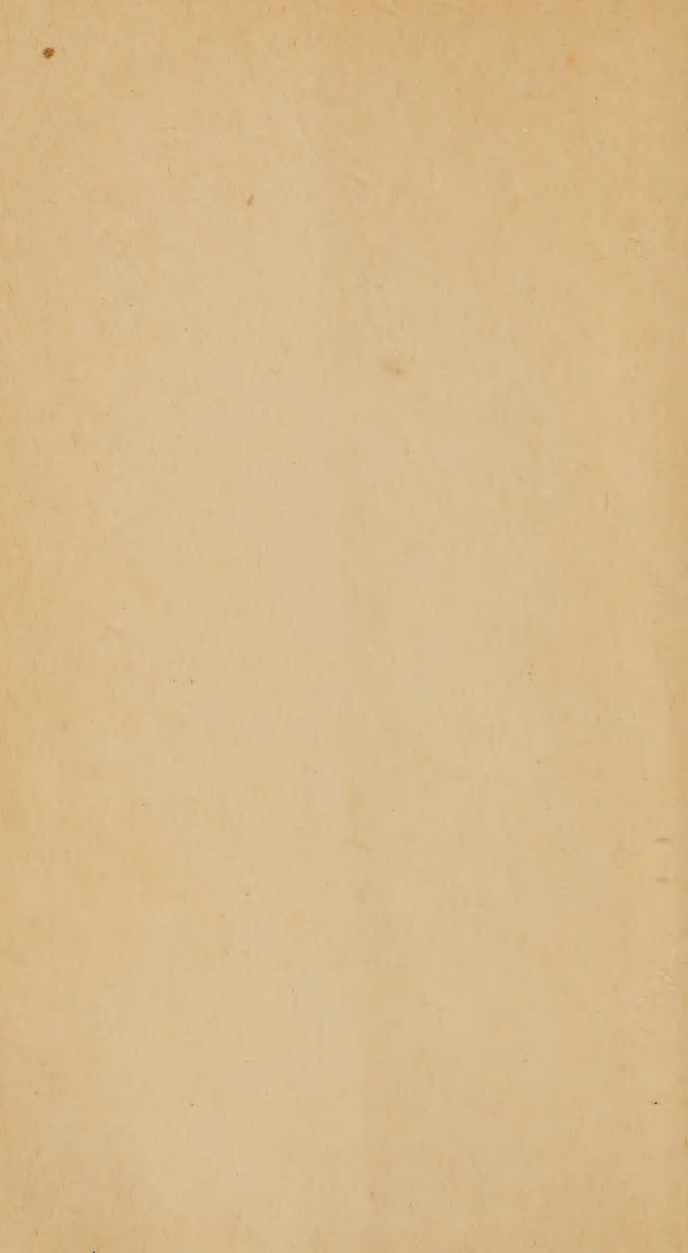
Don't Hurt Me!

L.P.

X.S.

S.P.









"I HAVE A BANDBOX YOU HAVEN'T SEARCHED YET." — Page 1

Brave Heart Series

AMERICAN PATTY

A STORY OF 1812

BY

ADELE E. THOMPSON

Author of "Beck's Fortune," "Betty Seldon, Patriot,"
"Brave Heart Elizabeth," "A Lassie of the Isles,"
"Polly of the Pines"

ILLUSTRATED BY

J. W. FERGUSON KENNEDY



BOSTON

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AMERICAN PATTY

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FOREWORD

As the War of 1812 passes more and more into the period of remote history, its importance and the terrors attending it in certain parts of our country and along the Canadian border, are less understood than they deserve to be. For, though naturally overshadowed by the Revolution, the War of 1812 called for an equal exercise of patriotism, courage, and endurance on the part of those whose situation involved them in its scenes. It is for this reason that these pages were written: to show to the young people of the present what the boys and the girls of that day were called upon to face. For it was not in the Carter home alone that the choice lay between secret flight or an oath of allegiance to the king and service under the king; or where the mother and children were left to meet days of anxiety and hardship alone and unprotected.

Nor are the Carters a family of fancy. The story of their perils is still a household mem-

FOREWORD

ory; while the little flax-wheel, which played so important a part in the family history and shared the memorable winter journey from the home in the clearing to the new one by the lake-side, though long silent, still holds a place of honor.

And though to-day peace and friendship happily reign on both sides of the border, and wars and rumors of war are no more, patriotism, loyalty, courage, and fidelity still endure. The expression of them may differ, but their value remains unchanged.

ADELE E. THOMPSON.

June 1, 1909.

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AMERICAN PATTY

CHAPTER I

PATTY'S RACE WITH THE WOLVES

FAINT and far away a low cry came on the wind, but as it reached Patty Carter's ears she checked her horse and bent her head to listen.

The light of a late afternoon still flushed the open sky, but under the shadowing trees the twilight was already thick and gray; and save for the narrow opening of the frozen road, the trees wide-spreading, close-ranked, stretched away from her on every side into the wide solitude of a Canadian forest, and of the time of 1812.

As she listened again the sound came on the wind, this time a little louder and nearer. The brown horse also heard and pricked forward his ears uneasily. "Yes, wolves, Brown Ben!" Patty spoke as if answering him.

“Not a pleasant sound, is it? We must hurry away from them as fast as we can.” And at the tightening of the bridle rein Brown Ben sprang away.

There was a light fall of snow on the ground, for April was still in its earliest, but as horse and rider pressed on, along the line of white, where the road narrowed to a thread behind them, one might have caught glimpses of dark shapes. Shadows, were they, cast by the tall tree trunks? No, for those were motionless, these swiftly moving; at first a gray, indistinct mass, till at last with savage, snarling hunger-yelps, they dashed boldly out of the woods into the road.

Patty had not till then seen her pursuers. Now as she turned in her saddle for a backward glance the color left her cheeks, and her brown eyes grew wide as they noted the size of the pack. But she did not scream or faint. For that matter there was little use in screaming, as there was no one to hear her, and no house nearer than her own home, and that was five miles away; and as for fainting, she had never fainted in her life, and to do so now would only be to fall the prey of those fierce

and cruel fangs. Besides, though she was but a girl of sixteen, Patty had lived in the woods long enough to have learned both courage and self-reliance. So, while she shuddered with the realization of the danger which was so close, she but set her teeth the tighter, "Ben, Brown Ben," she urged, "you must do your best, or they will overtake us. You *must* do it, both for my sake and yours."

Patty's little riding-whip hung at her wrist, though seldom was it that Brown Ben ever felt its touch; but now, slipping it into her hand she struck him sharply, "I really have to, you know," she added as by way of apology. And though he had been going a good steady gait for some two hours, returning from the post town twelve miles distant, the fleet little horse now dashed away with almost the speed of a deer.

But if a horse can run like a deer, so also can a pack of hungry wolves, the more so when they see before them a prize so tempting as a fine young horse, to say nothing of a young girl, her rounded form and rosy dimpled face only half hidden by her cloak and hood. Gaining steadily in spite of every effort, nearer

they came, closer, till at her very heels she could hear the snap of their strong white teeth, and almost feel the heat of their breath, as the foremost one tried to spring and fasten on her horse's back. In that moment Patty would have given much for one of the rifles that hung over the stone mantel at home. But her only weapon of defense was the whip in her hand, and turning suddenly she slashed among them right and left. So close were they that the lash struck the faces of the nearest, and with howls of pain and rage they fell back among the rest. But it was only for a moment, and again they were crowding on her. Again and again, with a frantic strength in her arms, she beat them back, and each time as they fell away the brown horse, with his ears laid back, and his slender length flying, as for life, would gain a little.

Patty's face grew tense and set. Home had never before seemed so far away, the miles, she was sure, were of double length, and the minutes were like hours. Once her horse stumbled and nearly fell. Patty's heart gave a thrill of horror, for, with the wolves closing in, for a moment it seemed that defeat and



BROWN BEN WAS AWAY AGAIN AT HIS BEST SPEED. — *Page 13.*



its terrible end was at hand. But as with the energy of desperation she was beating them off, Brown Ben gathered himself up and was away again at his best speed. On they went, on, and around them the day grew dimmer, the dusk deeper, dashing through little trickling streams, over the rough roots of trees, across marshy places where the ice cracked sharply, up hills and into valleys; and ever with that terrible following, gray, gaunt, relentless, with red and glaring eyeballs, and red and foam-flecked jaws, snarling, snapping, panting, leaping.

It had been a race so close that more than once it had to Patty almost seemed hopeless, when at last they dashed into a clearing, a stout log house set in its center; from the chimney of this rings of smoke curled against a sky where the last glow of sunset red still lingered, while a cheerful light shone through the tiny four-paned windows from the fire on the hearth inside. Though Patty was hardly a rod, ahead she drew a breath of relief. Surely the wolves would fall back now, at these signs of life, this visible nearness to man. But in their mad frenzy they were by this time be-

yond fear or pause, and Patty saw that she dare not even slacken speed or they would be on her.

“Father! Help, quick!” she cried shrilly.

Hardly was the call uttered when the door opened and her father stood in its lighted space. At a glance he saw Patty’s peril, and throwing the door wide he shouted to her, “Don’t stop! Ride in!” then, turning, he caught up his loaded rifle.

Still the pack rushed on, as though they saw only the prey so nearly within their grasp, so near that the leader giving a spring fastened his fangs in Patty’s outblowing cloak. At this a sharp report rang out, his clutch loosened, he dropped heavily. The rest wavered, hesitated for an instant, but that was enough. In that breath of time Patty had bent low over Brown Ben’s neck as he darted through the door, inside the house, and only stopped when he struck the wall opposite with a force that nearly threw both horse and rider to the floor.

Her father sprang into the house behind Patty, and her mother, standing ready, hastily shut and barred the heavy puncheon door the

moment he was within. It was none too soon. A moment more and the wolves were at the threshold, flinging themselves against the stout door, yelping more angrily than ever now that they were baffled and cheated.

"Never mind, I'll give them something to howl for." Mr. Carter was ramming down a bullet for another shot as he spoke, and cautiously opening a crack in the window he thrust out the muzzle of his rifle, took careful aim, and another wolf lay dead on the snow. Sullenly and slowly the pack drew back as though at first not understanding the meaning of the still forms; and it was not till three more of their number had fallen that they took fright, then, with a last snarling cry, they swiftly turned, and the gray shapes disappeared in the gray shadows of the thick woods beyond the little clearing.

They were hardly out of sight when, "Hello, there!" shouted a hurried voice, as a door on the opposite side of the house opened and a young man, very much out of breath, ran in. "What's the matter?" he panted. "I heard the gun-firing and ran as fast as I could. Why—whatever—?" He paused and

looked around in astonishment; the horse in the house, its head drooping, its sides covered with foam; Patty sitting, a little white-faced heap, on the floor where she had slipped from her saddle; the two-year-old baby boy clinging, crying to his mother's skirts, an older boy and girl of eight and ten huddled frightened, excited in a corner and his father with the smoking rifle in his hand.

For answer Mr. Carter pointed out of the window at the dark forms of the outstretched wolves. "Look there, Alson. And they just missed Patty."

"Patty!" and he turned to her, his ruddy face a shade paler. "You don't mean that you've been chased by wolves?"

"I — thought I was," with a tremulous little laugh as she rose to her feet. And then as the others gathered round with eager questions she told the story of her five-mile race. "I've heard people tell what it was like," she added with a shudder, "to have wolves after you. But to hear them coming nearer and nearer, and to know that those red mouths are open ready to spring on you, oh, it's something more dreadful than can ever be told!

I'm sure I never want to try it again, even if I did win."

Her father was looking from the window, "It was a close shave, I hardly see how you did it."

"I do, my child," it was her mother's voice, low and soft. "It was because God was with thee."

"I'm sure he must have been," Patty answered soberly, "or I never could."

"One thing is certain," and Alson laid his hand on his sister's shoulder as if to assure himself that she was still alive and safe, "You will not go to town alone again."

"Indeed I shall," was Patty's quick answer. "Think how much time it saves you and father. And I'm not going to be scared out by the wolves. You know it isn't often they are hungry and bold enough to attack people; anything like this never happened before since we lived here. Besides they missed me this time, they might again."

Mrs. Carter had been lifting the cover of an iron bake-kettle which stood in a corner of the wide fireplace. "We will not talk about 'other times' now," she said as she lifted

out the steaming loaf. "The brown bread is done, and I think we would all, Brown Ben as well as the rest, be the better for some supper."

"Right, as always, Mary," and Mr. Carter glanced up from the rifle he was reloading.

"Then, Alson, will thee take the horse to the stable; John, bring in an armful of wood; and Lucy, wash Robby's hands?"

"And am I not asked to do anything?" laughed Patty, as she hung her cloak and hood on a peg driven in the wall.

"I think what thee has already done is enough for one day," was Mrs. Carter's smiling answer as she arranged the simple meal on the homespun but whitely spread table.

With an impulsive motion Patty threw her arms about her mother, "Oh, mother, I never knew before how dear home was, how dear you all are!"

The mother's hand trembled slightly as she smoothed back the tumbled brown hair from the white forehead. "And I think we have also felt how dear our little Patty is to us."

"I say, Sis," Alson paused as he was buttering his third slice of the savory brown

bread, "I'm glad your experience didn't happen to our new neighbors across the lake. It would have frightened them almost out of their lives, and might have sent them straight back to England."

Patty's face brightened, "Oh, have our new neighbors come? I'm so glad! Why didn't you tell us before?"

"The wolves drove them into the background."

"Have you seen them; when did they come?" asked his father.

"Yes, I was over there this afternoon. They came to-day."

"Do tell us about them," urged Patty. "Just think of having neighbors not quite a mile away!"

"I'll tell you all I know. Their name is Morant; and they came from near London. The father and mother are both dead; there are two brothers, Oliver and Charles, and two sisters, Ermina and Margaretta. They are just over, and hurried through to their place before the roads should break up for spring. They are all as nice as can be—I'm sure we shall enjoy them—but they have no more

idea of life here than had the babes in the wood; and an old uncle who has come with them has the least of any. Why they never even saw a log house till they reached Canada!"

"And why have they come?" asked his father.

"To make their fortune, like the rest of us."

"And did thee not invite them to come and stay with us till their own house was in order?" questioned his mother.

"To be sure I did, but they said they had rather stay with their things. Such a lot of furniture you never saw. Something like Aunt Emily's spinet, too, that they call a 'piano,' and a wardrobe almost as big as the house. Where they are going to put everything is more than I can tell. We got some beds up to-night, I promised to go over to-morrow and help move in the rest—and I was thinking if Patty could go with me she might help the girls."

"Can I, mother?" was Patty's eager appeal.

"Surely thee can. We must do all we can for these newcomers; from what Alson says it will be hard enough for them at the best."

CHAPTER II

NEW NEIGHBORS

THE Carters' clearing ran down on one side to the border of a small lake, and it was on the shore almost opposite that the new neighbors had come. In winter Patty and her brother would have made the distance on the ice, in summer they would have paddled over in their canoe; but now the water covered with thin and broken ice would permit of neither, and they had to take the longer way by land round the head of the lake.

Not that either minded the walk in the crisp morning air, they were used to life out of doors and for all the snow was on the ground the joyous breath of spring was abroad. Down the wood aisles the leaf buds had a reddened tinge, blue jays were calling from the tops of the trees, and once they caught the glint of a bluebird's wing. At last, crossing a cedar swamp, the woods thinned and

opened into a fresh clearing, in the middle of which stood a new house of cedar logs, with a litter of packing-boxes around the open door.

“This is my sister Patty,” was Alson’s introduction, as they came up to the little group gathered around one of the big cases. “She’s a pretty handy girl around our house, so I brought her with me to see if she couldn’t be the same here.”

They all laughed at this informal presentation. The two young men bowed, with a slight evident embarrassment at not having on their coats. The older of the sisters held out her hand and was saying, “I’m sure, Miss Carter, it is a great pleasure to meet you,” when the younger, and about Patty’s age, ran forward and caught both her hands in a warm clasp.

“I am so glad to see you,” she cried impulsively. “Your brother told us about you, and I was wishing you would come. You see the woman we expected for help has disappointed us, and everything is so new and strange that really we hardly know what to do, or how to do it. Everything is tangled like a skein when you haven’t found the right end.”

She paused and looked in Patty's face, "I'm so glad you are to be our neighbor. I know we shall be friends."

The sincere tone, the winsome face, and the smiling light in the dark blue eyes all went straight to Patty's heart, and she answered as impulsively, "I know we shall, too; and I'm as glad as you are."

"Margaretta!" her sister's voice was gently reproving. "Miss Carter will not know what to make of you."

"Yes, she will. I see it in her face," and Margaretta gave the hand she still held, a squeeze. "You see I'm always shocking Ermina. It's in the blood, I suppose, our grandmother was Irish."

"Scotch-Irish," corrected Ermina.

"Exactly, Scotch-Irish," with a little mocking mouth at her sister.

"My grandfather was Scotch-Irish, too," said Patty.

"How charming! Then we have much in common. But because of that Irish—or I should say Scotch-Irish strain, I sometimes forget the correct and formal."

Patty's eyes danced, "I shall like that, be-

sides it's little of the formal you will find here in the woods. And you mustn't call me 'Miss Carter', I shouldn't know whom you meant. It's only on occasions of rare dignity or reproof that I rise to 'Martha,' and for everyday I'm just plain 'Patty.' ”

Margaretta clapped her hands. “Good! Patty you shall be. And remember we are Oliver, and Charles, and Ermina, and Margaretta, on all occasions. Oh, yes, and Uncle Theobald, I forgot that you hadn't seen him yet,” and with that she drew Patty inside the house.

“Uncle Theobald,” leading her up to an old man who sat at a small table placidly writing, in the midst of the confusion, “this is Patty Carter, one of our new neighbors. She has come to give us a welcome to the woods, and make us feel that we are real Canadians.”

Before she had ended Uncle Theobald was on his feet; a short-legged, long-bodied little man, with a frizzly brown wig, somewhat askew; a brown coat, the collar standing up about his ears in such a great roll that at first glance his head seemed to be merely set on his shoulders and below this a vast expanse of

waistcoat, drab-colored, and gaiters of the same shade.

“ Ah, yes, Miss Patty Carter,” and he waved the pen he still held in his hand. “ Pleased to know you ; had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of your excellent brother yesterday. Yes, we are Canadians now, but as yet we are most unfamiliar with this sort of life, in fact we have hardly recovered breath from our long journey, first by sea, and then over your dreadful roads. I really thought,” with a plaintive accent, “ I should die on the way from York. And part of the distance, too, we had no coach at all ; only a great open wagon, a mere strong box set on four wheels, with short planks laid across the top for seats. And such roads ! They were bad enough at the best, but this way you have of cutting trees into lengths and laying them side by side to drive over, ‘ corduroy ’ I think you call it, is something more awful than I had ever dreamed of. I tried every way I could to save my poor bones, but it was no use, I was thrown and thumped and bumped till I am almost too sore to move.”

“ Never mind, Uncle Theobald,” and Mar-

garetta gave him a little pat, "I will rub you with liniment again to-night; you said that made you feel better."

"Well, perhaps a trifle," he admitted. "In the meantime," with a wave of his hand toward the paper on the table, "I have commenced a letter describing our journey, and giving an account of the novel house which is to be our domicile for the present. I have been inquiring just how it was built and I think I have it all set down; the felling of the trees, the notching of the ends to keep the square frame together; the roof with that kind of wooden slate you call shingles, and, strangest of all, the fact that in the whole there are no nails used except on the roof—no one would think that wooden pins and an auger could make everything so fast. The pine slabs, too, with which the floor is paved I must not forget to mention. It is all really an art of the woods, and will be a subject of great interest and curiosity to our friends in England."

He paused and gave a puffy sigh. "Dear old England! I expect my heart will often turn there. But I could not think of my

brother's children coming into this great wilderness without an older person to guide and counsel, and watch over them, no matter what the inconvenience or sacrifice to myself."

"Just wait, Uncle Theobald," was Margaretta's cheery response, "and see how cozy and comfortable we will make you."

"I know, Margaretta," he sighed again, "you will all do your best, however little that may be. And one thing I am resolved, not to utter a word of complaint, whatever I may suffer."

"Of course," Margaretta turned to Patty, "the house does seem odd to us all, but I like it for that very reason. You see the boys are putting a partition across, so this large room is to be kitchen, dining-room, and drawing-room in one; the two small rooms are for the boys and Uncle Theobald, and Ermina and I have the big chamber upstairs for ourselves. only it does seem such a queer way we have to get to it," and she glanced toward a ladder of round green poles fastened against the side of the house, "Oliver says we could have stairs but that would take up so much more room."

Patty nodded, "I can understand. I know

how strange everything seemed to me when we first came to Canada."

"Then you are not Canadians?"

"Except by adoption. We have only lived here about five years. Our old home was near the Hudson river, in New York State."

"Oh!" Margaretta's eyes widened, "then you're Americans. I never saw any before. Are there any others here?"

"Oh, yes, a good many. There are several families near us, but most of them are Loyalists, that is they were on the side of England at the time of the Revolution."

"And was your father?"

Patty shook her head, "He was too young to be in the army, but his father was, on the American side. My mother was a Quaker, and they do not believe in war, so her father did not fight on either side."

"And your mother is a Quaker? I knew some Quaker ladies in England. Does she always dress in drab, and say 'thee,' and 'thou'?"

"She's not exactly a Quaker now," explained Patty, "because she married outside the church; but she wears drab more than any-

thing else, and she uses the plain language, especially at home. I know you'll like her, she's so sweet and good you couldn't help it."

"Of course I shall if she's your mother." Margaretta brushed a bit of moisture from her eyes, "It is a great deal to have a father and mother; we miss ours more than I can tell. But let us go and see how they are coming on with the unpacking."

Glancing back when they were outside the house she laughed softly, "Uncle Theobald was so busy reading over his letter that he didn't notice what you said of your grandfather's being in the American army."

Patty stopped, a slight flush reddened her cheek, "I didn't think.—Perhaps that will make a difference —"

"No indeed," Margaretta interrupted. "We may have cousins in America. We had an uncle, the oldest of the family, in the army sent over against the Colonies. He was wounded, and taken into an American home, where he fell in love with the girl who took care of him: so he resigned from the army, married her, and never came back to England at all. He and his wife are both dead, but

my grandfather never mentioned his name afterwards, and Uncle Theobald thinks it was dreadful, but I think it was delightfully romantic. And though papa was an army officer himself I don't believe he thought it was so very bad, at any rate I have heard him laugh and say that if it had been mamma he was afraid he would have done the same."

"O dear!" exclaimed Ermina as the others joined her, "where we are going to put all these things is more, I'm sure, than I can tell."

It was little wonder she thought so, Patty felt, as she looked at the great packing-cases scattered about, while on the ground lay a large pier glass shattered to fragments.

"Too bad, isn't it?" and Margaretta paused by the broken mirror. "But after all, I am afraid, it would have been rather in the way in a house like this. When we broke up our old home there were so many articles we felt we could not part with, though I can see that some of them are hardly what we need here. Of course the eight-day clock we want, and the carpets and china, and a good deal of the furniture; the piano we could hardly spare, and the books, too, we couldn't do without them."

Patty had been eyeing these latter wistfully, "And so many as you have!" she said, "I never knew anyone but the minister at Bel-field who had so many."

"And you care for books? Then we can read together."

"There is that big wardrobe," added Ermina, "we were afraid yesterday that it wouldn't go in the house at all, but your brother says by taking off its feet it just will. It would have been too bad not to have it, for we had a terrible time getting it here from York. I don't know that we ever could if the boys hadn't bought a yoke of oxen, 'Elephant and Hippopotamus.'"

Uncle Theobald had come out in time to hear the last words, "Ah, yes," he hastened to add, "I am going to write an account of them to England, and of the curious way in which you use them, with no harness of any kind, just a piece of wood that goes over their necks."

"A yoke," mildly suggested Patty.

"Yes, I remember. And you guide them with no reins, only a beech wand. Most curious."

"You must see my oxen." Oliver Morant was speaking to Alson as they tugged at the great wardrobe. "Fine fellows they are. It doesn't seem as though I could ever learn to manage them as you do here, but perhaps I may."

As the young men were talking Ermina leaned toward Patty, over the box of bedding she was unpacking, "Do you know," her tone hardly above a whisper, "what I am the most afraid of here is Indians! Our brothers wanted to come to Canada, and of course Margaretta and I would go wherever they did, but I can't help thinking about the Indians, and what if they should attack and kill us?"

"Oh, there isn't any danger from the Indians around here," was Patty's assurance. "They are as friendly as can be; they come to our house very often, and I never think of being afraid of them. You will not be when once you have seen them."

Ermina shook her head, "I know I shall. Are there any very near?"

"A few are camped now about two miles away, at the foot of the lake. They come there every spring to make maple sugar."

Ermina drew a long breath, "Then I don't believe I shall sleep much to-night."

"But you are perfectly safe," urged Patty, "Alson will tell you so. They will be sure to visit you, and will be very much hurt if they find you are afraid of them."

"I'll do my best to hide it, then. But how do you treat them?"

"As you would any one. My father says an Indian is a natural gentleman. At least it is seldom they do anything rude."

Uncle Theobald was near enough to catch scraps of the talk, "Ermina, my dear," and he drew himself up with dignity, "you have nothing to fear. I am here to protect you. Is that blue box at hand? Ah, I see." He turned to Patty, "Formerly I was a corporal in the militia, and I brought my equipments with me as a safeguard against wild beasts and savages." As he spoke he drew out of the box and held up a brass helmet, a regulation sabre, a brace of pistols, and a pair of high jack boots.

"You'll be safe with those, sir." There was a broad smile on Alson's face.

Uncle Theobald was gently rubbing the

brass helmet with his sleeve. "These bring other scenes before me. Though I shall never mention it, I expect greatly to miss my military friends," and he sighed.

"It's true there are not many military men near us," Alson answered, "But there's a military lady, Widow Major McQuigg. She is always talking about military people, and lamenting the lack of military society."

"Quite right, too. Finest society in the world. I shall have to make her acquaintance."

"That reminds me," observed Oliver, "that I have heard talk of trouble between the United States and England."

"I can't think that!" and Alson looked his surprise. "Of course here in the bush we don't hear much of what is going on. But while there may be a little bad feeling I can't believe it will ever amount to anything serious."

"Nor I either," agreed Oliver.

Patty had turned her head away not to laugh at Uncle Theobald. Now she uttered an exclamation. "You're going to have an Indian visitor, here comes old Peter Muskrat."

As they looked, out from the woods a dignified old Indian walked slowly toward them, arrayed in a new blanket coat, all the seams bound with red, his leggings and moccasins, also new, were embroidered and fringed; while, the crowning glory of all, was the pointed blue cloth cap on his head, ornamented with a deer's tail dyed blue, and several cock's feathers. Evidently very much taken up with the magnificence of his appearance, he strutted forward, responded to their greetings, with a calm "Bo'jou'," accepted the tobacco, proffered at a whispered hint from Alson, sat a short time in silence, and then made an equally dignified retreat.

"Do you know," Patty was keeping step with her brother as at the close of a busy day they walked homeward, "I was so glad we were there when Peter Muskrat came, or they might not have understood that his intention was purely friendly? But I couldn't help thinking that if Uncle Theobald had only had on his brass helmet, and sword, and jack boots, what a sight they would have been!"

"He will have to wear those when he goes to see Mrs. Major McQuigg." He

paused and gave a toss to the empty basket that he had carried in the morning packed to the brim, "Patty, do you know I've just thought. There's a husband for the 'Major Widow.' "

"Alson, how can you talk so? And you ought not to call her that."

"I can't help it; she looks the part. You know she can hardly notice any one here, because we are not military; and when Uncle Theobald gets on his 'equipments,' and the 'Major Widow' her black silk dress with the rattly steel trimming, and her headdress with the Major's military plume standing straight in front, why, they'll know they were made for each other. You don't believe me, but just wait and see."

"At any rate they are a nice family."

"Indeed they are," heartily, "I'm glad enough to have them come."

"Especially Margaretta. I noticed your eyes turned her way pretty often," Patty's tone was mischievous.

Alson blushed, "Well, she's worth looking at, isn't she?" Then hastily, "The boys took me out to see their oxen, great raw-boned

fellows, not much like ours. And Charles bought one of the cows because she was such a handsome red color, and she doesn't look to me worth anything for milk. But then they will soon learn about these things."

CHAPTER III

A VISIT TO A WIGWAM

"PATTY, you promised to take us to that Indian encampment, and here it is nearly four weeks and we haven't gone."

As Margaretta spoke, she with Ermina and Patty were sitting on the low stone doorstep of the Morant cabin. The litter of packing-boxes had been cleared away; the western sun shone on white curtains at the tiny four-paned windows, the tea-kettle was singing over the fire in the wide fireplace, a crimson carpet glowed ruddy on that part of the floor where stood the piano and case of books; the house had changed from an empty shell of logs into a home.

"But you have been so busy every day that there hasn't seemed any time to go," answered Patty.

"That is true," Ermina turned her head, with its smooth dark braids, for a complacent

glance inside. "And when I remember how this house looked the day we came, and look at it now, I feel that we have not only worked in that time, but really worked wonders."

"And wonders we never could have worked if it hadn't been for Patty and her brother," added Margaretta.

"I'm sure we haven't done very much," was Patty's protest.

"Indeed you have." Ermina's voice was sincere in its earnestness. "I don't know what we should have done, with everything so strange about us, if it hadn't been for you two. Your father and mother have been kind and so have the other people around, but some way we could ask questions and help of you so much easier than of those who were older."

"And you have both been so quick to think of things," chimed in Margaretta. "If Alson hadn't planned out a way to get the big wardrobe in I don't know but we would have had to make a hen-house of it; and that would have been a shame, besides where would Uncle Theobald have kept his best clothes? And what would we be living on if you hadn't

taught us how to cook venison, and to manage a bake-kettle?"

Patty, squirming uncomfortably under their praise, hastily changed the subject. "As for the Indian encampment, if we are going, we ought to right away: some have left already, and no one knows how soon the others will leave."

"Then why can't we go this evening?" asked Ermina. "The moon is almost as light as day."

"Oh, yes," cried Margaretta, "that will be like an adventure! You can stay all night, Patty, and sleep in the 'warehouse,' that is what we call our chamber since we have stored all the furniture we could find no other place for up there. Here comes your brother, with the boys. You can send word home by him, and your mother will not be anxious if she knows that you are with us."

As she spoke the young men came toward them, and Oliver gave a flourish to the long ox-whip he carried in his hand, "I tell you, I am beginning to feel like a real Canadian. Thanks to Alson, I can yoke up the oxen and not feel afraid of their horns, and I think very

soon I can say 'haw,' and 'gee,' with the best of them."

They all laughed, then the girls explained their plan, "Very well," Oliver assented, "only Charles or I had better go with you for protection."

"I think not," objected Patty. "The squaws will not talk to us if you are along. We cannot get lost, for we will follow the shore of the lake."

"But what about bears?" questioned Charles.

"If there were any, the Indians would have found them. It's perfectly safe," assured Alson, "if it wasn't, I wouldn't consent to their going."

As they started, Uncle Theobald stood in the door and watched them go. "If you had not assured me there was no danger I should insist on accompanying you. I came, as you all know, solely to be your protector, no matter at what sacrifice to myself. As for the Indians, I have had several interviews with the one you call Peter Muskrat, and while he is not a great conversationalist he seems a most interested listener. In fact, I

have begun making a study of Indian habits and character, which I am jotting down to elaborate in letters to England."

Twilight had not quite merged into evening but the full moon over the water beside which they walked made the night almost as light as day. The great forest stretched duskily away from them as if sleeping, and the only sounds that broke the silence were the light breeze in the tops of the lofty pines, and the soft ripple of little waves on the shore: for with spring suns shining the last of the ice had melted and the placid lake lay, an expanse of blue, save where the moon spread its silver path.

"I should like to see an Indian girl," Ermina said, "I have read of their beauty. Are they really pretty?"

"No, not often," Patty answered, "That is, judged by our standards. The prettiest one I know, I hope you will meet to-night. Poor girl, her story is a sad one. When but a tiny baby her father was drowned in Stone Lake, by the swamping of his canoe during a sudden squall: her mother saw the accident from the shore, and swam out to help him,

Stone Lake
Ermina
Patty
V. S. Sturges

but though she succeeded in bringing him to land he was already dead. Now it is one of the superstitions of the Indians that the soul of one who has been drowned is accursed. He can never join his tribe on the happy hunting grounds, but his spirit must haunt the lake or river where he lost his life. So the body is buried on some lonely island, which the Indians never pass without leaving a little food, tobacco, or powder, to supply his wants, but never is he buried with the rest of his people."

"What a foolish superstition!" cried Margareta.

"But that isn't the worst of it. His children, also, are thought to be unlucky, and few dare to marry them, especially the girls, lest some of the father's curse be visited on them. It is so with this girl, whose very name means 'the voice of angry waters.' An orphan since a little child; she is almost always apart from the others, and seems so solitary and lonely that almost from the first she drew my attention and sympathy, and now we are fast friends."

"And has she no lovers?" asked Ermina.

“Yes, Snow Storm, the nephew and heir of Chief Long Turtle loves her. He will never speak her sad name but calls her Anoonk — a star. At the same time he is afraid to marry her, because his people believe and fear the old superstition. He will, though,” and Patty spoke firmly, “if I can have any influence, for Snow Storm is really a fine fellow. I hope, too, to reach him through brother Alson.”

“I think, from all I hear, that your brother is a great favorite with the Indians,” said Margareta.

“That is because he is always ready to do little things for them. Now the beginning of Snow Storm’s friendship was his coming one day in great distress that his gun was bewitched, and could not shoot straight. He said, ‘Shoot ten deer — get nothing,’ and asked if Alson could make it right. Of course Alson knew it was all Snow Storm’s fancy that the gun was bewitched, so he told him to leave it till the next day, gave it a good cleaning, and handed it back, telling him solemnly that it was all right now. He thought no more about the matter, but in a

little while Snow Storm came again, this time with a quarter of venison for 'man who cured gun,' and though Alson tried to explain to him, it was no use, and to this day Snow Storm will have it that he took the spell from his gun."

The girls were laughing over Patty's story when Ermina suddenly stopped, "What's that?" she asked in a terrified whisper, as an unearthly sound came from the woods beside them, "Is it wolves?" as the cry came again, as it seemed shriller and nearer.

"Neither. Don't be frightened," Patty answered quickly, "It's only a great owl up in the trees. You will soon get used to them."

Ermina drew a faint breath, "I'm sure I thought we were going to be killed and eaten!"

"What is that on the lake?" questioned Margaretta, whose eyes were on the water.

Patty laughed, "It is Alson out fishing. I had an idea he would be somewhere within call; and when we come to go back I'm very sure he will be near enough to shore to take us in his boat."

By this time the red light of a fire was seen shining through the trees, and a few steps brought them to a wigwam in a thick grove of cedars on the sloping bank of a little creek. As they drew nearer they saw that a kettle in which bark was boiling hung from crotched sticks over the fire; around which was gathered a group, a girl, an older squaw, two small boys, with flannel shirts their only covering, playing with a puppy and a baby, laced in an embroidered case and strapped to a papoose board, which was leaned against a log, so that the baby had the effect of standing, as it looked at them with round unwinking eyes. As soon as she saw her visitors, Sarah Muskrat came forward to meet them, a grin of pleasure on her dark face, made still darker by the mass of straight black hair that fell in long braids over her shoulders. With a wave of her hand she invited them into the wigwam, where they seated themselves on the fur rugs she spread on the ground for them. As they did so, the English girls looked curiously around at the coneshaped wigwam of birch bark laid over a framework of poles, at the heaped-up blankets

on the ground, the garments hanging against the side, and topped with Sarah's pride, a low-crowned man's hat, the band set round with up-standing hawk's feathers. As for herself, she wore a loose cotton jacket, a short petticoat of cloth, leggings worked with porcupine quills, and a striped blanket thrown loosely around her.

"You all alone, Sarah?" asked Patty.

She nodded, "Yes; Indians away hunting, come home much deer."

"And where is Bright Star?"

"By and by. Gone to fetch water."

Almost as she spoke the old blanket which served as a door to the wigwam was pushed further aside and a young girl stood in the open space, in the white moonlight: the red glow of the fire touching her dark flowing hair, and deepening the flush on her cheek. As Patty had said, her features were small and regular, her face a delicate oval, her large dark eyes were full of a wistful tenderness, but bright and shy as those of a deer, while a scarlet flush touched her olive cheek and lips and set off the dazzling whiteness of her teeth. Unlike her companion, she was small

and slight, with delicate little hands and feet, and there was an artistic grace in the folds of the white blanket she drew around her. Recalling her story Margaretta took special note of all this, and also of the loving admiration in her eyes, as a smile of recognition passed between her and Patty, and putting her burden down she softly glided to a seat beside the latter.

Presently as they sat talking the old squaw suddenly bent forward, put her hand against her ear. "Whist! whist!" she murmured.

"What is it?" cried Ermina, starting to her feet. "Is there any danger?"

Sarah Muskrat shook her head, "Deer — a deer, in bush," she whispered; and rising she caught up a rifle that stood in the corner. "I hear sticks crack — great way off. Stay here — I go," and whistling to an old hound that lay beside the fire, she slipped out, her moccasined feet making no sound on the leaf-strewn ground.

A great way off must have been the sound, for to the ears of the white girls listening in the doorway of the wigwam, nothing broke the stillness; on one side stretched the silent

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lake, and on the other side the forest, equally as silent. "Do you hear anything?" asked Margareta, turning to Bright Star who stood half timidly beside her.

The Indian girl smiled and nodded, "Listen, dog find track."

Almost as she spoke came the discharge of the rifle, followed by the sharp baying of the hound. She made a swift gesture, "Must go help bring in deer," and she darted away into the dusky shadows.

"We might as well be going," advised Patty. "Sarah Muskrat and Anoonk will have work on hand now, and I see Alson's boat rounding the point."

CHAPTER IV

DISQUIETING NEWS

THE sunshine of a June day was bright on the little lake as a light step ran up the path from its edge towards the Carter cabin, and Margaretta's voice called gaily, "Patty! where are your eyes, that you didn't see us coming across the lake in our new canoe. No I can't stay. Charles is waiting, we're just out to christen the canoe. Come down and see it."

"Did your brothers make it?" Patty asked as she reached down her sunbonnet from its peg.

"No they bought it of an Indian this morning. You know we have been talking of one ever since the ice went out of the lake. And of course the very first thing we had to come over to show it to you people, for we can do nothing unless you approve," and she gave Mrs. Carter's arm a caressing pat.

By the time the girls had reached the narrow strip of beach Charles had called to Alson where he was working in the field of corn, planted among the stumps, and he was already there looking over the canoe with the critical eye of experience. The boat itself was made out of a long black walnut log, burned and hollowed out, and shaped to a sharp point at each end outside with an ax. "Weren't we in luck to get such a fine canoe?" Charles was saying eagerly. "An Indian and his wife paddled up in it this morning, 'C'noo,' he said, 'sell, good, you buy?' We'd been wanting to buy one, and now seemed our chance. The old fellow grunted some more and made signs with his hands to show how it skimmed the water, and how easily it could be steered. We were afraid we couldn't manage a cockle shell like yours, and I whispered to Oliver that this looked good and strong, I thought we'd better take it."

"How much did you pay him?" questioned Alson, as Charles stopped for breath.

"When I said to the Indian, 'What you ask?' he put up eight fingers, and nodded towards them, 'Dollars,' then he made mo-

tions as though smoking and said 'Tobacco.' Oliver thought that was pretty high, but Uncle Theobald said that was a cheap price for a boat, and as we wanted one very much we gave him the eight dollars without the tobacco. Isn't it a beauty?"

"A very pretty canoe. Why did the Indian say he wanted to sell?"

"He didn't say. When Oliver asked him he only grunted. He wanted the money, I suppose. Did we pay too much?"

"I guess not. It's a very well-made boat," and Alson ran his hand along the edge, "A trifle heavy, maybe."

"Well, perhaps," admitted Charles, "but we won't mind that."

"It is heavy," interrupted Margaretta, "my arms ache now from helping to paddle it. What I want is one of those birch-bark canoes, embroidered on the sides and ends with porcupine quills. I saw one coming down from Round Lake the other day that was a perfect beauty, and skimmed the water like a bird."

"But think how easily they roll over," urged Charles.

"All canoes roll easily," explained Alson, "because the bottom is round, so safety in one depends very much on sitting steadily and never leaning to either side. But birch-bark canoes are graceful, and in case of injury one can darn them like a stocking, or patch them like a shoe."

"But now leave the canoe and come up to the house," urged Patty, "Lucy and I found some strawberries in a little clear spot in the woods this morning. You must have your first taste of Canadian strawberries and see how delicious they are, especially with a dash of maple sugar and some of old Brindle's cream."

"Besides," suggested Alson, "Father has gone to town and he may bring some letters for you."

Margaretta laughed, "How fortunate that we have so good a reason for accepting your tempting invitation! We can come with a clear conscience now."

"Resting isn't hard for me these days," and Charles gave a mock groan. "What with ax-blisters on my hands, and sun-blisters on my neck I'm pretty sure there will soon be

nothing left of me but bones; in fact I'm almost afraid sometimes that nature never cut me out for a Canadian farmer."

"Oh, don't give up yet," urged Margaretta, "this life is not so bad. Thanks to Patty and her good mother I'm learning quantities of things I never would have known in England; I can manage a bake-kettle, I understand the mysteries of corn bread, and I'm even thinking of attempting to milk a cow."

"It really surprises both Oliver and myself," said Charles after making his canoe fast to a tree and while they were all walking toward the house, "to see with what heroism and cheerfulness our sisters have accepted the life here, so different as it is from anything they had known. If he or I had realized what it was to be, and how unable we would be to hire any help for them, we would never have consented to their coming."

Margaretta gave his arm a pinch, "Consent or not, we should have come all the same; and Ermina and I would be ashamed to complain when you and Oliver endure so much that is harder with hardly a word."

Charles gave little Robby, who had run to

meet them, a toss to his shoulder, "It's the one who has it easiest who complains most; but poor Uncle Theobald takes it out in writing back to England."

Mrs. Carter was awaiting them in the door with a cheery word of welcome, and inside stood the table spread with linen, homespun, but white as the bleaching sun could make it, and having for its central dish the great bowl heaped with crimson berries, together with slices of cold venison, freshly churned butter, and a brown loaf still warm from the depths of the big stone oven.

They were still lingering at the table when Mrs. Carter looked out, "Alson, here is thy father now." As he rode up to the door her quick eye noticed the grave pressure of his lips, "What is it, Ezra?" she questioned, rising and taking a step towards him. "Has thee bad news?"

"In a way, yes. News of war is always bad news."

"Of war!" the exclamation sprang from every lip.

"I saw a gentleman who had just come from St. Catharine's, and brought the news

that on the 19th of June the United States declared war against England."

A moment's silence followed his words. Alson was the first to speak, "I can hardly believe it."

Charles Morant shook his head, "I'm afraid it's too true. I knew there was talk of strained relations between the countries before we left England. I heard it discussed on the ship coming over, and something about the matter when we stopped in Montreal, but I don't think any one thought it would really come to war."

Patty had been thoughtfully looking out over the clearing at the deep green woods beyond, now her eyes came back to the troubled faces around her. "But we are so far away, here; even if there should be war it won't touch us in any way will it?"

"We will trust not, my child," her father answered gravely. "It would certainly seem that what with trying to save our stock from the wolves and bears, and clearing our land, and getting something to live on, we had fighting enough to do without fighting our fellow men."

"One thing is certain," a flush had risen to Alson's cheek, "whatever comes I shall never fight against my own fellow countrymen!"

"Of course you wouldn't," Margaretta's reply was quick. "Why, no one would ever expect you to; it would be like asking Oliver or Charles to fight against England."

"Who knows but I must have to fight for England yet," Charles answered with a short laugh. "But come, Margaretta," he added, "war or no war we must be going back, Uncle Theobald will want these letters Mr. Carter has brought for him as soon as possible."

Each was conscious that with the news a sudden constraint had fallen on the little group and the parting was quickly made.

"What a great heavy canoe!" Patty said, as holding Robby's hand she stood beside Alson on the narrow strip of beach and watched them away.

"Yes, it's heavy enough for a war canoe."

"Don't speak of war, it spoils everything!" cried Patty impatiently, "I can't bear the sound of the word, we were all so happy till this came. But really, hidden away as we are

in these woods, it can't harm us, do you think it can?"

"I know it doesn't seem possible, but yet one never can tell. All I do know is what I said before, that I will never lift a finger against my own country: for if we do live in Canada, and love Canada, I'm an American still."

"So am I. And Margaretta said you would be right."

Alson's lips bent from their set firmness: "You needn't speak of it, but I am going to see that Margaretta has a birch-bark canoe; I know where there is a beauty that I think I can get."

Patty's cheek dimpled, "A better one than your sister has?"

"Would you want her to have a poorer?" was his answer.

"No, Alson," and she gave his arm a little pinch, "It's the good old way."

In the house they found their mother reading a letter aloud. "It is from thy father's brother, thy Uncle James," she explained. "Since we last heard from him he has gone to the Ohio with his family, and

settled at a place he calls Cleveland, on the shore of Lake Erie. The spot, he thinks, has natural advantages and in time will grow into a town, perhaps as large even as Peekskill."

"He also gives us more news about the war," added their father; "for he writes that they had just had advices from Washington that war was to be declared at once, and that the United States can no longer allow its ships to be searched by the British, and sailors to be taken from our vessels and made to serve in the British navy. More than all, he urges us to leave Canada at once."

"But we cannot do that," protested Alson.

Mr. Carter shook his head, "No, all I have is invested here. It would not be possible to leave unless I could sell, and even then I hardly know where we would go. James speaks of the Ohio, but at the same time he says that in case the war should reach the Lakes they will be in danger from the British and Indians."

"Indians!" and Lucy opened her eyes wide with surprise, "why, father, fancy Joe Muskrat or Snow Storm hurting any one?"

"But you must remember we have only

known them in times of peace. Too well do we know the cruelties inflicted by the Indians in the Mohawk Valley during the Revolution."

Mrs. Carter sighed as she drew forward her little flax wheel, "It is little wonder that the Friends will have naught to do with war, for 'tis sadness and cruelty, broken homes and hearts."

"But you would have your sons play their part as men?" urged Alson.

"I would that my sons and all men, would fear God and keep His commandments. Then there would be no war."

CHAPTER V

THE WAR CLOUD DARKENS

FOR some weeks nothing more was heard of war, and at the Carter home it was a frequent subject of question if the rumors had not been false ones. But one day Alson came back from a "log rolling" some miles away grave-faced and quiet.

"It is only too true, father, about the war. The Canadian militia have been asked to take an oath of allegiance to the English government; all the 'flank companies' of this district have been ordered to report at Fort George, at the mouth of the Niagara River, to receive their muskets, with the promise that then they can return home again. Oliver and Charles Morant have joined' the militia, and they all urged me to."

"And will you?" questioned Patty.

"No. I told them I might once, but now

if there was going to be war I could take no part in it against my own country. I never can fight against the stars and stripes."

"And what did they say to that?" asked his father.

"They agreed with Tom Adoo, and he laughed and asked, 'Who talks of war? Americans will not invade Canada, and we shall not trouble them!'"

"I hope he is right," was Mr. Carter's comment, "life is hard enough, and busy enough without a war added."

But soon other disquieting rumors came: the militia summoned to the frontier had not been allowed to return; regular soldiers were marching from York (now Toronto) to Fort George; all the Indian warriors on Grand River had been called for. This last they learned from the young Indian, Snow Storm, when he came to bring the birch-bark canoe Alson had obtained from him.

"English want Indian help," he had explained, "Give good money, every man go. Chiefs say yes."

"And what about Bright Star?" asked Patty, who had been silently listening. "Are

you going away to leave her alone; I thought you loved her."

"Yes," he nodded slowly, "yes, but bad luck, Anoonk's father drown."

"Oh, Snow Storm!" cried Patty, "I thought you were too brave to be afraid of an old superstition."

He drew himself up proudly, "Snow Storm not afraid."

"Then make Bright Star your wife. Let her sit in your wigwam and keep it for you till you come back. Think what it will be to have her to welcome you, and she is so sweet and good and gentle."

The working of the dark face showed the struggle in his mind.

"Snow Storm," Patty spoke earnestly, she had saved her crowning argument for the last, if that failed she could think of no other, "do you think my mother has brought bad luck to my father, to our home?"

He looked surprised at the question, "*Non-ocosiqui*, (humming bird) no, she cook, make wheel go,"—giving the motion with his hand,—“she cure sick, she good luck everybody, white man, Indian.”

"Yes, I have heard my father say the best day of his life was the day he married her — and her father was drowned. And do you think, Snow Storm, that the Great Spirit, from whom comes all good gifts, would be angry with Bright Star because her father's boat upset in a storm when she was a wee baby?"

Snow Storm stood silent a little time, then he threw his head back, "I will trust the Great Spirit, Anoonk shall come to my wigwam."

"I didn't know you were such a match-maker," laughed Alson as the Indian paddled away.

"I don't care," retorted Patty, "he will never be sorry. Bright Star is a dear, good girl, and loves him dearly. Her life has been sad enough, and if Snow Storm dare not marry her, no one else ever will."

At that day when newspapers were few and railroads and the telegraph still far in the future, news made what would seem to us of to-day but slow progress. At the same time from hamlet to hamlet and clearing to clearing the news went of the war at hand between

England and her former colonies. The Canadian government was quick to take action, and one day Mr. Carter returned from Bel-field to tell that the Canadian Parliament had passed a law making it treason for any man or woman, to speak against the government, or to refuse going, or to persuade any of his Majesty's subjects from going to war. "So you see," he added, "we have need to order even our tongues."

Mrs. Carter had risen at his words and stood white and still, "Then Ezra, if we go with only our hands, let us go back to our own country and people."

"It is too late. The governor has already issued a proclamation, making it treason for any one to attempt to cross the line."

"And with good reason," cried Alson, "if he had not, half the people here would be leaving the province."

"And what do they do to punish people for treason?" asked Lucy, her rosy face growing a little pale.

"The punishment is death," answered Patty, "shoot you for the first offense, hang you for the second, and cut off your head for

the third. And if that be treason, as Patrick Henry said, make the most of it."

"One thing," concluded Alson as he struck his ax in a stump by way of emphasis, "the Yankees whipped the British once, and they will do it again."

But this belief was soon to have a rude shock. One late August afternoon the son of a neighbor, also an American, rode hastily to the door, "Have you heard it — the news?" he called with a half-sobbing accent.

"News! What news?" cried Mr. Carter and Alson in a breath, as they all gathered round him.

"'Tis hard to believe but it's true. General Hull — the coward — has surrendered Detroit, and the American army under his command to the British. My father says it is the most shameful thing that has ever happened in the history of the United States."

"It isn't possible!" protested Alson, "It can't be."

"Yes it is. My father saw the courier on his way to York with letters from General Brock, and had the story right from him. I tell you the English feel good over it."

For a moment all stood silent, stunned by the unexpected tidings. Mr. Carter was the first to speak, "I have hoped against hope that another war might be averted, but it is certain now. The Americans will never rest under defeat."

From this time on, events moved rapidly, what with the enlisting of recruits, the making of military roads, the frequent drilling of the militia, and the recurring rumors of American invasion of Canada. But still life went on very quietly in the little clearing hidden away in the green woods, except that after Hull's surrender a shadowy something of fear and dread seemed always hovering near to all those whose loyalty was across the line.

The woods around were softening into the September haze when one morning Patty, hearing a noise, glanced out through the open door to see a strikingly fantastic figure alighting from his horse. It was Uncle Theobald, his brass helmet strapped on his head, his long jack boots coming above his knees, in a scarlet military coat several sizes too large, and his big sword dangling at his side. Patty knew that the little man had been drilling the

local militia company, and her thought was that he had stopped on his way home from that duty, but he waved aside her cordial greeting and paused unsmiling in the doorway.

“I have come,” with his most impressive dignity of manner, “on a painful duty — but the duties imposed by war, as I have written to my friends in England, are apt to be painful. And first madam,” to Mrs. Carter, “I wish to thank you, your husband and family for all your kindness shown both to myself and my youthful charges, and to express to you my regrets that these pleasant relations can no longer continue. No,” with increased firmness of manner as he saw the looks of surprise on every face, “as one in the service of His Majesty, bound by the closest ties to the military, I cannot fellowship with those whose sympathies are with the enemy, and who have openly refused their aid to the Government. Nor is this alone my decision; I have sought the counsel of that lady of most correct views, Mrs. Major McQuigg, and she entirely coincides with me. I have explained this to my young charges, and as I have forbidden them to continue the acquaintance, so

I must request you to abstain from all further manifestations of intimacy."

Alson, who was cleaning his rifle making ready for a deer hunt, had risen and stood grave and pale of face. "And do the — the others, agree with you in this?" he asked.

Uncle Theobald gave a hesitating cough. "Of course they will be guided by my judgment. Great as was the sacrifice in leaving England, I see more than ever, as I have written to my friends, the need they have of me to guide and direct."

"But, Friend Morant," Mrs. Carter's voice was persuasively gentle, "if — as thee says, we cannot see eye to eye, cannot we still be friends at heart?"

"No, we can't," snapped Uncle Theobald. "You are enemies of the king. I forbid you all, and that son of yours especially, from coming to our house, or stepping on our premises. And I shall see to it that the birch-bark canoe recently bestowed on my niece Margaretta is duly returned." And wheeling, the little old man in his grotesque array stamped loftily away to his waiting horse.

He was hardly out of sight when a slim

young figure came flying up the footpath from the lake, her hair blown back from the scarlet handkerchief knotted over it, her eyes flashing and her cheeks crimson, both with exertion and excitement. "Has Uncle Theobald been here?" she demanded as she stepped inside.

"I know he has —" looking from one to another,— "I hoped to have been first. Well, I want you to know that I shall pay no attention, not the slightest, to what he says."

"Margaretta, Margaretta," remonstrated Mrs. Carter, "I am afraid thee speaks without considering; though thy presence has brought us great gladness and pleasure, and we shall all miss thee more than I can say, at the same time thy uncle has the right to be obeyed."

Margaretta put her arms around Mrs. Carter. "But think, neither you nor I are to blame for the war, then why should it affect our friendship? You do not hate us, do you, because the Americans are fighting the English?"

"To be sure not, dear child, what a question!"

"Then why should I not love you even if

the English are fighting the Americans? You see it works both ways. I'm sure if my father were living he would not feel as Uncle Theobald does. He never thought it was so dreadful if our great-uncle did marry the American girl in the Revolution. It's all that old Mrs. Major McQuigg. But I'm not going to give you up, please understand that. Why I'm quite too selfish. What would I do without dear Auntie Carter here to mother me;”—with a little hug by way of emphasis,—“and the rest of you to make me happy?”

Patty's eyes were shining. “I knew, Margaretta, that was just the way you would feel.”

“How could I feel any other way? Of course you love your country if you have left it. I don't blame you. I love my country, too.”

“Neither must thee blame thy uncle too much,” urged Mrs. Carter, “if he puts his country first. I am sure it is duty as he sees it.”

“Oh, Uncle Theobald's heart is all right, it is his head that has gone wrong. And to-day he is more than usually upset, because this morning Oliver's commission came. He was

wearing the helmet before but that so stirred his military spirit that he added the boots and the sword, and I don't know but he will sleep in them."

"And has Oliver a commission?" exclaimed Alson.

"Yes, a lieutenant's. Uncle Theobald has been trying to get him one ever since we knew there was to be war. In one way I am glad, for though Oliver never complained, I knew farming was not to his mind; his taste was always for a military life, only he could not afford to buy a commission."

"And when does he go?"

"Oh, he has gone. The order was for him to join his regiment at once at Fort George, as the Americans are gathering on the other side and may cross the river at any day. If they do there will be a battle, and Oliver may be either killed or wounded. It frightens me to think of it!" And with a little sob she dropped her head on Mrs. Carter's neck.

"But," and looking up she brushed away her tears with a faint smile, "I am a soldier's daughter as well as sister; I must be brave. Only you won't mind what Uncle Theobald

says, and you will be friends with us just the same, will you not?"

"Friends, yes. But thee must remember thy uncle has forbidden us coming to thy house."

"It isn't his house," fumed Margaretta; "It's our house, and we have a right to ask whom we please."

"No, dear," Mrs. Carter's tone was firm as it was mild, "thee must respect thy uncle's age and relationship. But," and there was a suspicion of a twinkle in her eye, "we have not forbidden thy family's coming here."

"And there is one who will come, you may be sure of that."

"Not without thy uncle's knowledge and consent. The daughter and sister of soldiers must be true as well as brave."

"Oh, mother, that spoils it all," remonstrated Patty.

"No, Patty," Margaretta spoke slowly, "your mother is right, I see it now. Well, at least I can think of you."

As Margaretta was on her way back to the lake she turned to Alson, who with Patty was walking beside her. "You see I came in the

canoe you gave me, and I am not going to give it back, either. I will sink it first."

"I didn't believe you would," he said quietly.

"Would you have cared?"

"Yes," it was an outburst of feeling, "it would have hurt me, hurt cruelly."

"And that would have been a poor return for all your kindness." She paused where the dainty little birch-bark canoe was drawn up on the gravelly beach, and reaching out took a hand of Alson and Patty in each of hers. "I am beginning to think that I don't know what may happen, but whatever does let us always remember that we are friends, pledged friends, dear friends."

The truth that one never knew what might happen, Patty was soon to realize. Only the next day a little squad of soldiers came riding across the open clearing. "I have a notice for you," the petty officer in charge called to Alson. "The Government has found it necessary to order a military draft, and your name is on the list of those chosen."

Alson laid down the ax he had thrown over his shoulder. "When am I to go?"

"Now, with us."

A slight pallor showed under the tan of his cheeks as he faced the officer. "I am willing to serve Canada, the Government in any possible way, but I was born and grew up on American soil; I will never fight against my own countrymen and country."

The officer looked at him for a moment. "My orders were only to bring you in, but there may be ways, young man, to make you change your mind. And there are other things besides fighting needed; supplies to be moved, fortifications built, military roads made, and your muscle looks good for any of them."

CHAPTER VI

A DESERTER

ON October 13th, 1812, the Americans crossed the Niagara river for the invasion of Canada. There is no need to repeat the story of the defeat they suffered at Queenstown; a defeat which brought joy and fresh courage to the English, and gloom to all whose sympathies were with the American cause. Word soon came from Oliver of his safety, and a returning soldier reported that Alson, with others whose loyalty was suspected, had not been enrolled with the regular troops, but had instead been set to strengthening fortifications and doing similar work.

Despite this assurance concerning the absent, the days wore slowly away both at the log cabin at the Carter clearing, and the one across the little lake, where Ermina and Margaretta consoled one another, and Charles chopped alone in the cedar swamp, felling the trees in

a "slashing," or to use a local term a "fallow," to be ready for the spring firing. Since Uncle Theobald's orders Patty had not been to the house, but she and Margareta had a meeting place at the head of the lake, with a system of arranged signals, so they often were together, for Uncle Theobald's training duties, and the growing frequency of his visits to Mrs. McQuigg left him little time to devote to a watchful care of his niece.

October, November, and a part of December had worn away. The last brown leaves had fallen from the trees, the days had shortened, the lake was glassy with ice, thin rifts of snow began to whiten the bare and frozen ground, and the rigor of a Canadian winter was fast laying its iron touch on the land. One evening as the Carters sat gathered around the wide stone fireplace with its big back-log and ruddy blaze, Patty suddenly lifted her eyes from her knitting, to the four-paned window opposite.

"What is it?" asked Johnny, who sat on a stool beside her at work on a pair of snowshoes.

"I thought I caught a glimpse of some one

looking in the window. And listen — is not that a step outside?”

“It may be only the breaking of a limb you hear.” Mr. Carter had hardly spoken, when the wooden latch lifted, the door slowly and cautiously opened, and a snow-powdered figure staggered rather than stepped inside.

“Alson, my son!” and his mother started to her feet from her spinning.

But Alson lifted a warning hand, “Hush!” he whispered hoarsely, “Don’t speak so loud. Patty, bolt the door and draw the curtains close over the windows. My coming may bring danger to all of you, and if I am seen it will mean death to me.”

As he crossed the room and dropped limply into a corner of the high-backed settle before the fire, in the strong light they saw more clearly his pale and haggard face, and his clothes torn and shredded as if by contact with briars and thickets.

“Alson, tell us, what has happened, what danger are you in?”

With steady eyes he met his father’s anxious gaze. “Father, I saw the American troops shot down like hunted rabbits at Queens-

town, I saw the field after the battle with its dead and dying, and with that scene before my mind I could not help make batteries from which my countrymen were to be fired on, I could not help make roads over which the English soldiers might more quickly reach them, and so I have left the army. I — I have deserted.”

“Yes,” Mr. Carter spoke slowly, “I have been afraid it might end in that.”

“I hope I haven’t been wrong?” Alson’s voice was pleading. “But I couldn’t help it. Things grew more and more unbearable till I could endure no longer.”

“When did you — leave?”

“Nearly two weeks ago. Five others left with me. We thought we might be able to reach the American line; but the soldiers were on our track so quickly we had to separate and scatter, each for himself. Every road by which I tried to break through was guarded. I’ve nearly starved and frozen hiding in the woods. I knew if I stayed out much longer, that I should die, and I wanted to see you so that I determined to take the risk if I died for it. How good the fire does feel!” and he held

out his thin and frost-bitten hands towards the blaze.

His mother had lost no word of what he had said, but while listening she had raked out a bed of glowing coals and was already setting the long-handled spider, spread with thick slices of venison, on them. "So fortunate thy father killed a deer to-day. Poor boy, thee must be nearly starved!"

"I've dreamed the last few nights of seeing things to eat. I had no gun with me, and even if I had I should not have dared to fire it for fear of betraying myself."

"Then what did you have to eat?" questioned Johnny.

"Not very much. I never knew before that a fellow could live on so little. I picked up acorns and beechnuts, and twice I caught a rabbit in a snare I made with some cord I had in my pocket." He paused and looked from one to another, "I suppose you are all ashamed of me, I have disgraced you, I know. I hesitated at the door whether I ought to come in or not."

Patty, who was helping her mother, put down the loaf of bread she was cutting at the

table, and laid a hand on each shoulder, "Alson Carter, I was always proud of you, for you were my big brother, and the best big brother a girl ever had; but I was never so proud of you as now, that you are ready to suffer rather than do what you feel is wrong."

"Patty, thee should not be so forward of speech," gently chided her mother. "But, Alson, under the circumstances I cannot blame thee. And thee did right in coming home, whatever fortune the Lord has in store for us we will share together."

"I indorse what your mother says," added his father. "It's a bad business from beginning to end, and all we can do is to make the best of it."

Mrs. Carter was turning the savory-smelling contents of the spider on a blue and white platter, "Come, Alson, first have something to eat and we can talk about what is best to be done later."

Alson needed no second bidding to take his place at the table; with Johnny and Lucy close on each side to wait on him, and his mother watching that they did not urge him to eat

more than his weakened condition would bear.

Mr. Carter had already lifted down his rifle from its deerhorn supports, and examined its priming. Now he carefully drew a curtain far enough to one side to look out. "I'm glad," he said as he dropped it again, "that it's beginning to snow; any tracks you may have left will now be covered."

"Yes, I thought of that," answered Alson.

"Who do you think would track him: an Indian?" asked Johnny anxiously.

"Most of the Indian men are with the army. And I do not believe that those who have been our friends would betray me, even if they knew."

"Oh, I'm sure Snow Storm, and old Peter Muskrat, and Joe Long Bear wouldn't," protested Johnny.

In all this Patty had taken no part: she had dropped into Alson's place on the settle, and with her elbow on her knee and her chin in her palm sat looking into the fire so intently that she did not hear till her mother had asked her a second time, what she had done with the bread knife. "I was thinking," she said by way of explanation, "where we could put

him: some place where he would be safe when the soldiers come."

"The soldiers? What soldiers?" asked Lucy.

"Why when they can't find him anywhere else the soldiers will come here to look. Won't they Alson?"

"Now you speak of it, I rather think they will."

"Then we must have some place to hide you."

Mrs. Carter glanced around and her heart sank, anything like a hiding place seemed impossible in the two rooms that made up the house, with the open loft above, and not even a closet, much less a secret nook.

"He might hide in a cave," suggested Johnny, "And I could carry him things to eat every night after dark, as they did when the men who had fought for Prince Charlie were hiding out in Scotland."

"Or in a hollow tree," added Lucy. "Mother has told us, you know, about a soldier of the Revolution who hid in a hollow tree when the British were after him."

"I am afraid," reminded their father, "that

neither a hollow tree, or any such a cave as you could find around here, would be a very good protection for a Canadian winter."

But Patty had sprung to her feet, crying, "I know! There is that place under the floor where we keep the butter in summer; he can hide in that."

Hardly had she spoken when Johnny ran and pushing a big braided rug aside lifted a short length of plank and looked critically down. "It is a kind of cave, you see," he exclaimed, as the others gathered round to see what the possibilities might be.

The excavation was not deep nor large enough to be called a cellar, and had been made, as Patty said, for the storing of butter, with no thought of the use it now offered.

"I'm sure it will do finely," was Alson's verdict.

"For the present, at any rate," agreed his father. "Come, John."

In a few moments they returned from the barn, each with a great armful of sweet-smelling hay, which they threw down on the earth bottom. While they were gone, Patty and her mother had dragged down from above a

feather bed, which together with blankets and pillows they spread over the hay. "There, that looks comfortable," was Mr. Carter's comment.

Alson winked back the moisture in his eyes, "I can tell you this, I've seen nothing like it since I left home."

His mother laid her hand on his arm, "Thee is tired, and it is bedtime for us all. John, will thee bring the Bible to thy father; we must not forget that we have great cause for thankfulness to-night."

As Johnny handed the big leather-bound Bible to his father, Mr. Carter turned the leaves reverently, saying, "It seems fitting that we read for our portion to-night one of the Psalms written by David when he too was surrounded by enemies and fleeing for his life." His voice trembled a little as he began the words that have been a stay and comfort to many a despairing soul:

"The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?"

.
"Though an host should encamp against

me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident.' ”

As he read his voice steadied:

“ ‘For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me: he shall set me up upon a rock.’ ”

And as he came to the closing verses his tone rang with triumphant faith:

“ ‘I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

“ ‘Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.’ ”

Nor was the prayer which followed that of those in sore straits, rather was it one of thanksgiving for mercies received, for a reunited family, and of reliance on the promise of the Word.

Soon, silence and darkness had settled over the little home in the clearing: the snow dropping thick around it outside, and the dull embers sending a faint glow over the puncheon floor, under which the weary fugitive was

soundly sleeping. But above him the father and mother lay long awake, stirred by the gladness that their boy was under the home roof again; and quietly considering the difficulties that might await them in the future. And in his trundle-bed little Robby breathed in the sweet sleep of childhood, all unaware of what had so deeply touched the home-life that night.

CHAPTER VII

A CHARIVARI

THE storm which had hidden all traces of Alson's return home, at the same time made him, whether he would or not, a prisoner in the home. The expanse of untrodden white which stretched around the next day and many days after made further flight impossible.

"Why did I come?" Alson lamented the next morning as he looked out the window. "I had far better have stayed hidden out in the woods than have brought I know not what of danger and harm to you all."

"My son," his mother's tone was one of rebuke, "I count it the good providence of God that thee is safe at home, and not out freezing or starving this bitter weather."

"But if they should search and find me here, you will suffer for the crime of giving me shelter."

"We will not unduly trouble about that till

the time comes," was the placid answer. "For the present, the potatoes are done," as she uncovered a mound of hot ashes. "Lucy, thee may wing them off," handing her the big turkey wing to brush off the ashes. "Patty, I have put thy chair so thee can keep a watch out of one window, while I will the other. I count it most fortunate that we have windows looking two ways, and that we were able to get glass for them, instead of oiled paper."

So to outward seeming the household resumed its usual course, with surface seemingly untouched, untroubled; though in truth every heart bore a weight of anxiety; the children as they played around the door were really sentinels, ready to give an alarm, and it even was impressed upon little Robby that on no account must he say a word about brother Alson, or mention that he was in the house.

Not since Uncle Theobald forbade their visits had Patty been inside the Morant cabin; at the same time she and Margaretta, near the head of the little lake, managed to see each other often. It was a spot that with the freezing over of the lake could be reached by Patty

quickly on her skates or snowshoes. Margaretta's friendship had been one of her greatest pleasures, but now whenever they met she had to make a constant, and to her frank nature an almost painful effort not to betray by look or manner the constraint which the burden of her secret imposed. There was no mention by either one of Alson's name, and as the days slipped by Patty wondered if Margaretta knew, or how much?

One morning Patty saw across the ice the waving of a red scarf, the signal that Margaretta wanted to see her, and strapping on her snowshoes she quickly slipped down over the snow-covered ice, to where Margaretta was waiting her, restlessly walking back and forth on the frozen beach, her usually smooth forehead puckered in a frown under her close-drawn hood, and her cheeks flushed with excitement.

"Oh, Patty," she cried, running to meet her and catching her hands, "have you heard?"

Patty's first thought was of Alson, and her heart seemed to leap to her mouth; she was sure her face paled, but she managed to answer, "No, I've heard nothing. What is it?"

Margaretta had dropped on the log of a fallen tree and was tapping the snow impatiently with her foot. "I'm so vexed that I don't know what to do, and yet it's so ridiculous that I can hardly keep from laughing."

"You are talking a riddle," said Patty.

"It won't be a riddle long. Uncle Theobald is going to be married—to Mrs. McQuigg!"

"The 'Major Widow!' Are you sure?"

"Yes, he told us himself. That horrid old woman, with her feathers sticking straight up, and bobbing with that marching step of hers! I left Ermina crying; and Charles went out and slammed the door, and I'm almost sure I heard him say 'damn,' and I just wished I could say it too. It's all because this dreadful war has set Uncle Theobald military-mad, and the 'Mrs. Major' tickled his fancy. I suppose he'll go right on calling her that after they are married."

"And when is that to be?"

"At once, this afternoon. Very quietly, 'war time is not the moment for occasions of pomp or display.' Which means that the widow won't have to bake any wedding cake."

“And is he going to bring her to live with you?”

“Oh, no, it isn’t quite so bad as that. She can’t think of leaving her place, and at this time he feels that she needs him to protect her.”

“But I thought that he had come from England to protect you.”

“He gets around that by saying that he will still be near enough to look after us, too. One thing is certain. I have done everything I could to please him because he was our uncle, and did come with us, but when he goes to live with *her* I shall do as I please, exactly as I please. And you are not to mind anything he has said, but come to our house as you always did. Ermina says so too.”

“I’m not sure what mother will say to that: and are you going to come to our house now?”

It was Margaretta’s turn to hesitate, “I don’t think I can just now,” she answered lamely. “You know we are so busy with the spinning.”

Patty looked at her sharply for a moment, then she began to laugh. “I’m sorry for you

as can be, but it is all so funny. Now you will have an Aunt Theobald."

"No, I won't. I shall keep on calling her Mrs. Major McQuigg, and she and Uncle Theobald are both so proud of the title they will never dream why I do it." She paused and threw out her hands, "Oh, I hate everything about this war! I used to be so sorry that when Charles broke his leg it left him the least bit lame, but I am almost glad of it, for now he cannot go into the army."

When Patty had reached home and repeated her news Alson turned from where he sat before the hearth holding a skein of yarn for his mother to wind. "What did I tell you, Patty! I knew from the first how it would end. What an odd-looking couple they will make, he so little and thin, and she so tall and stout. I suppose Uncle Theobald will be married in his jack boots and brass helmet, and the 'Major Widow' no doubt will be decked in the military plume of the late Major, and the red waist made out of his coat. I'd like to see them, for a fact."

"Be careful," cautioned his mother, "thee is getting the yarn tangled."

“Well mother, I’ll confess that I am a little excited: but you know it isn’t every day that we have a wedding in the neighborhood. Though I fancy the Morants will be fully as comfortable with Uncle Theobald away.”

Later under cover of the whir of his mother’s spinning wheel he asked in a low voice of Patty, “Does Margaretta ever say anything of me?”

“She used to ask, every time I saw her, if we had heard from you, but she doesn’t any more.”

“Then that’s a sign that she’s heard, and I suppose she thinks a deserter is too shameful to mention.”

“I’m sure I don’t know what she thinks,” Patty’s knitting needles were going very fast, “but I know this, the young officers of the last company stationed at Belfield used to come over to the Morants’ pretty often, but Margaretta would have nothing to say to them, though they tried hard to be attentive to her as well as Ermina.”

The very next evening as the Carters sat around the fire, just before bedtime, they were startled by the sudden sound of firing

guns, mingled with loud shouts and yells, the braying of horns, the beating of drums, and the barking of dogs. For a moment in stunned surprise at this stormy uproar of discordant and hideous noises they all sat motionless, then Patty sprang to her feet.

“Goodness defend us!” she cried, running to the door and lifting into place the stout oaken bar, “Hark, they are firing again! They are coming here! Hide, quick, Alson, hide.”

But instead of making any movement Alson and his father looked at each other and both began to laugh. “Don’t be frightened, Patty,” Alson reassured her. “You look white as a sheet. I hope I may never be in any greater danger than from that crowd. Instead of coming here they are on their tuneful way to tender a charivari to Uncle Theobald and his bride. I knew what it was as soon as I heard the horns.”

“A charivari,” questioned Mrs. Carter, “what is that?”

“Why, mother!” and Alson assumed an expression of surprise, “have you been all this time in Canada and ask that question? They

say it is a custom the Canadians learned of the French in the Lower Province. When an old man marries a young wife, or an old woman a young husband; or, as in this case, it is two old people who ought to be thinking of their funerals instead of a wedding, all the young fellows around who have no better way of spending their time, meet together, disguise themselves by blacking their faces, putting on their clothes hind side before and wrong side out, wear horrid masks, caps trimmed with cock's feathers and bells,—anything to look as bad as possible. Then they start out, as you have heard, to the sound of tin kettles, horns, drums, fiddles made by stretching rosined ropes over a box with a rail for a bow, whatever they can get together to make a terrible noise: surround the house of the bride and groom, beat on the door with clubs, and demand admittance to drink the bride's health, or else be given money to treat the band at the nearest tavern."

"And what if they are refused?"

"They begin their unearthly uproar again, worse than before, if possible, and perhaps fire guns loaded with peas against the doors and

windows, in fact sometimes they break open the doors."

"And yet they call the Indians savages," there was a tinge of contempt in Mrs. Carter's voice.

"A charivari isn't exactly refined, for a fact," admitted Alson. "There has never been one around here before, but there have been several around Belfield way, and I presume some of the party are from there."

"I'd like to see it," sighed Johnny. "My, won't Uncle Theobald be mad?"

Patty laughed, "I fancy I can see him prancing out among them, jack boots, brass helmet and all, and ordering them to disperse, probably in the King's name."

"He will be a very unwise man if he does anything of the kind," was Mr. Carter's comment. "The more temper any one shows towards such a crowd, the better pleased they are, and the worse they act."

"Perhaps the 'Major Widow' will treat them to bride's cake," suggested Alson, laughing again, in spite of his misfortunes.

"Not much she won't." Patty's tone was emphatic, "She wouldn't anyway and they will

never scare her into doing what she doesn't want to."

"I am afraid thee is inclined to speak ill of thy neighbor," chided her mother. "Father, will thee wind the clock, and, Alson, cover the fire, it is past bedtime."

Later at night Patty heard through the wood the noisy charivari party on their way home; but this time instead of trembling she only smiled and snuggled closer in her blankets.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MOTHER SPINS

ONE morning of the following week Johnny came running in, "Patty, Margaretta is down at the point, and wants to see you right away."

"How do you know?"

"She called to me when I was looking for the brindle steer, and she said for you to come quick."

Hastily strapping on her skates Patty was soon skimming down the frozen lake, to where under a pine tree close to the shore, Margaretta was walking nervously back and forth. As she drew near the spot Margaretta ran down to the edge of the ice and held out her hands.

"Hold on to me. Don't take off your skates."

Patty looked at her in surprise, there was a breathless haste to her words, an excited

trembling of her hands. "What is it?" she questioned, "What has happened?"

"Nothing has happened. Only I thought you ought to know that the soldiers are coming to-day to search your house."

"The soldiers!" Patty gasped.

"Yes. I don't know where your brother Alson is. I don't want to know. And of course he isn't there. But I thought you ought to be told."

Patty was looking her straight in the face. "Then you have known about Alson all the time?"

"Yes."

"I suspected as much. And do you think what he has done was so very dreadful?"

Margaretta hesitated a moment, "I don't know what I think, only I should have done the same if any one had tried to make me help the enemies of England; and I'm glad to know that he's safe as yet."

"How do you know he is?"

"Your face tells it. You look worried often enough, but not as you would if he were in great danger or had been taken. No—" grasping Patty's hand more tightly — "don't

say a single word; it's better I should be ignorant."

"But how do you know about the soldiers? Are you sure it's true?" questioned Patty.

"Uncle Theobald brought the word, and I know he did it on purpose that I should give you warning — for when it comes to Uncle Theobald's heart, that is all right, it is only his head that goes wrong sometimes. He met the officer in charge of the soldiers last night and learned what was intended, and came over this morning, out where I was feeding the chickens. He talked around a bit first as to how beautifully he and the 'Major Widow' were getting along; and then told that in a casual sort of a way. 'Of course,' he said, 'there won't any one give the Carters any hint, so if Alson should be hiding at home, as the soldiers think he is, why, they will be sure to get him.' And with that away he goes, without even going into the house, and I hurried here."

Something akin to affection for the pompous little old man swelled in Patty's heart as she said, "I'll never forget this of your Uncle Theobald, never. I'll own I've been vexed

with him, but this blots out everything he has ever done or said. And I'm sure I hope he and 'Major Widow' will be happy."

"They ought to be, I suppose it is almost like living in barracks, they are both so military. Do you know, some one lost a drum the night of the charivari, Uncle Theobald found it, and now he beats the drum to call the hired man and woman to prayers, and the girl beats the drum when meals are ready. She has given him the belt and pistols once worn by the departed Major, and I presume he sleeps in his brass helmet for a night-cap."

Margaretta had seen the paleness that Patty's face went at her tidings, and she had rattled on to give the latter time to rally. By this time Patty had regained her self-control, "I'm glad the bond of matrimony fits so well," she answered as lightly as though they had spoken of nothing more serious. "And now I must be off home. If we are to have unexpected visitors we want at least to have the hearth swept and the house in order."

As she was about to turn she paused, and leaned forward till her face touched her friend's cheek, "Margaretta," she half sobbed,

"you dear, dear girl!" And loosing the hold on her hands with swift even strokes she swept away over the ice.

"It is only what I have been expecting," was Alson's comment as Patty hastily repeated her story. "I had better go and give myself up before they come, that at least will save the rest of you."

"Alson!" his mother's voice was firm, "thee will stay right here."

"But mother," he remonstrated, "you have other children to consider."

She smiled slightly, "Does thee think I forget any of my children?"

"And father won't be home till night," quavered Johnny.

"It may be as well that he is away," said his mother. "Were he here he might be tempted to say more than was prudent."

"And what will the soldiers do to us?" Lucy was wringing her hands as she put the question.

Mrs. Carter drew her close, "I trust, my child, they will do nothing. And now, Johnny, go upstairs and bring me some more flax for spinning. Then keep a watch out the

upper window for the soldiers, and when they come over the hill beyond the clearing give warning. Lucy, get thy sampler, thee has not worked on it for two days and at this rate thee will not finish it while thee is ten."

"But mother, how can I work when the soldiers are coming?" urged Lucy.

"Because they are, is the more reason why we should do the same as every day. Patty, watch that thy bread does not get too light."

"Perhaps I had better retire from sight," and Alson lifted the plank in the floor.

"There is no need of haste," his mother's tone was calmly quiet, "John will give the alarm in time. And remember, children, we are not depending on ourselves alone. There is a greater than earthly Power in whose hands we are. Do not forget to lift your hearts to Him."

Hardly an hour of suspense had passed when Johnny came hurrying down the ladder, "They are coming over the hill now. I counted ten redcoats. But we can hold the house against them for a while," and he caught down a rifle from the wall.

"John, put it back this moment!" com-

manded his mother, "Thee must do nothing, say nothing rash. Go out now and split some oven-wood that Patty may heat the oven for her bread. Do not be afraid. I will see that nothing harms thee."

It was a quiet scene on which the eyes of the soldiers rested as they rode into the clearing. The comfortable log cabin with a blue curl of smoke from its broad stone chimney, the sunshine reflected from its whitely curtained little windows: the silence only broken by the sound of Johnny's ax as he bent over his task. "We have taken them by surprise all right," the officer in command swept his glance around. "There isn't much show for hiding-places either. If he is here, as I think, I fancy we will find our man."

With a clatter of sabers they drew rein, and while one of the troopers held the horses the rest dismounted and followed the officer who pounding on the door with the hilt of his sword pushed it open without waiting for an answer. The scene inside was as peaceful as that without. Patty, the sleeves of her blue and white homespun dress rolled above her dimpled elbows, was kneading bread at the

table: Lucy in the shadow of the tall settle was working on her sampler; and with her chair on a braided rug and her little wheel before her Mrs. Carter sat in the middle of the room busily spinning, a white kerchief pinned over her neat drab dress, and her hair smoothly folded back under her plain white cap.

The officer fell back a little before the calm dignity of her face and bearing, "You must pardon, madam, an unpleasant errand, but our duty is to make search for one Alson Carter, doubtless your son, and a deserter from the king's army."

"I certainly would hold no one from a duty," her voice though low was steady, as she paused to moisten her thread from the tiny gourd of water which hung from her wheel. "Thee has liberty to search the house. It will not take long, for as thee sees it is but small; these two rooms and the chamber above."

As the search went on in spite of her efforts Patty's hands trembled as she kneaded the bread, Lucy made wild stitches on her sampler, and John, catching up an armful of wood sought refuge inside the house; but Mrs.

Carter's little wheel hummed steadily, and her foot kept an even pressure on the treadle, though just below it was hidden the fugitive they were seeking.

It was a thorough search, beds were prodded and looked under, lids of chests were lifted, barrels were examined, the brick oven was opened. When the house was finished the barn was gone over, bayonets were thrust into mows and stacks deep enough to have reached anything alive. "I tell you I was glad he wasn't there when I saw how they went in," Johnny reported later — for in a mingling of fear and curiosity he had followed at a safe distance.

For all this the searchers were evidently not satisfied. "We have failed to find your son," by this time the officer's face had darkened, his manner grown surly, "but I have evidence that he was seen in this neighborhood after his desertion, and I still believe he is hiding somewhere about. You may tell him that of the five who ran away when he did we have caught and hanged three, and we will catch and hang him yet. He needn't think to escape."

"How do you know but he has already escaped?" The insolence of the tone even more than the words had carried Patty past the endurance point, and turning she faced him, her eyes flashing, her cheeks crimson with anger.

"Escape isn't such an easy matter when there is a price on a man's head, and he must travel several hundred miles of Canadian woods in winter without fire or food."

"Oh, and so there is a price as well as a duty!" Patty's voice was vibrant with scorn. "I have a bandbox you haven't searched yet, perhaps you had better look in that."

Mrs. Carter had risen to her feet, Baby Robby clinging close to her skirt, "Daughter, thee forgets thyself," then to the officer with quiet dignity, "I make no apology after thy words; and now if thee is satisfied I will ask thee to leave."

"No, I'm not satisfied," was the short answer, "but I'll go for this time. As for your high and mighty girl she may sing a different tune when we have the Yankees well whipped."

"That will never be," was the quick retort.

"Because Hull surrendered Detroit, and you won the battle of Queenstown, you haven't whipped the Yankees, nor never will!"

With a black look at her the officer flung himself out of the house and onto his horse, and quickly the squad were filing in a red line across the white snow of the clearing.

Not a word was spoken till they were well away, then Patty threw up her hands, "Mother, how could you keep so calm? I thought I should suffocate."

"And I thought my heart would come up in my mouth," wailed Lucy. "And I've spoiled my sampler, too," and she held it up showing the uneven line.

"Never mind your sampler," Patty's voice was still stormy. "You can easily pick the wrong stitches out again. And what's a sampler beside Alson's safety? I expected every minute they would take up the floor, and they did look up the chimney in the other room."

"Yes," added Johnny, whose eyes still held a frightened look, "and one of the men said I was another little rebel, and ought to be stuck like a pig!"

"Let Alson come out and we can tell him all about it," urged Patty.

"I think I know the most," came a muffled voice from below, "especially Patty's flare-up. I almost laughed before I thought."

"Is thee sure they have all gone?" asked Mrs. Carter.

"Yes," answered Johnny, "I counted them, every one."

She moved the little wheel to one side and lifted the braided rug, "Come, Alson, we have been delivered from the hand of the enemy, for the present."

CHAPTER IX

LITTLE GREY WOLF

THERE had been a snowy morning, and in the afternoon Lucy and Johnny were varying their duty as sentinels by building a snow man, when Lucy ran into the house with the warning, "There's a squaw coming, with something that looks like a baby in her arms. I guess she's Mary Grey Wolf."

For the coming of white people Alson disappeared under the floor, but for Indians and especially squaws, he merely made a retreat up the ladder to the chamber above. Hardly had he done this when the door softly opened, and a tall, thin Indian woman came in, crossed the room, and as she caught Mrs. Carter's eye, unloosed the folds of her blanket and laid, almost at her feet, before the fire, a baby boy wasted and worn to a shadow.

"Papoose much sick, die," she said mournfully, looking fondly down at the small figure,

the great tears running down her dark face. "White squaw save papoose — poor Indian woman much glad."

Mrs. Carter was already kneeling by the side of the child; but a brief examination only convinced her of what she had felt at the first glance, that the little fellow was beyond human aid, and had indeed but a few hours to live. Rising she took the poor mother's hand, and with tears of sympathy filling her own eyes shook her head sadly.

"Try to save him," urged the squaw. "All die but him," and she held up four fingers. "Bring way above lake white squaw to cure."

"I wish I could cure him, my poor friend, but I cannot. He is in God's hands."

With that, her last hope gone, the Indian mother dropping on her knees by the baby slowly rocked herself back and forth. "Papoose die," she wailed, "alone, alone — mother all alone."

In the meantime Mrs. Carter had lifted and laid the baby on a soft bear-skin rug, and was chafing the cold little hands. "Patty, warm up some of the squirrel broth we had left from dinner, perhaps he can take that."

Patty hastily poured the broth into a small saucepan, and raking out some glowing coals set it on them to heat. Then giving her mother the steaming cup, she lifted the wasted little form tenderly, in her arms, as Mrs. Carter fed him spoonful by spoonful. While this was being done the mother sat beside her, rocking herself back and forth, and moaned, "Papoose die, all alone!"

Patty offered her food but she shook her head. A very fever of restlessness seemed upon her, and as soon as Mrs. Carter had laid the baby down on the rug again she gathered him in her arms and began wrapping him in her blanket to go. Mrs. Carter hesitated a moment, for the thought of Alson and the danger of his discovery was constantly with her, then she looked in the face of the tiny boy, whose life was so nearly ended, and laid her hand on the mother's arm. "Don't go, stay here," she urged.

But the other only shook her head, "Go home, go home," she repeated.

"If you will go, wrap him in this cloak of Robby's," and taking down from a peg a thick woolen cloak she folded the child in it, and

drew Robby's red woolen mittens on the tiny wasted hands. "Let me know how he is tomorrow, and if I can help you I will come."

The Indian woman had watched her in silence, and now with a slight sound that one could hardly interpret, she opened the door, and with her baby pressed closely to her passed out, to take her sorrowful way back over the frozen snow to her wigwam.

The next morning they saw an Indian coming out of the woods toward the house, a little blue cloak was over his arm, and a pair of little red mittens swung in the wind from the string that united them. It was Grey Wolf.

Mrs. Carter met him at the door, "Papoose dead," he said holding out the garments. "Die in night. White squaw kind, poor Indian much thank."

"I am sorry, my friend. Is there anything we can do?"

"Mother," whispered Patty, coming up close behind her, "can't we make something to lay the baby away in? It seems dreadful to put it down in frozen ground, the way they do."

"Grey Wolf!" he was turning away but stopped at Mrs. Carter's call, "would thee like to have a little coffin made for the baby, as we would do if it were ours?"

A gleam of pleasure touched the dark stolid face, "White man's way good way, I be glad."

"That is something I can do," said Alson when told of the promise, and who more and more was chafing at his enforced idleness. "You needn't look reproving, mother; it's dreadful for a great stout fellow like me to have to be hiding like a toad in a hole, when there is all that ten acres I had planned to chop this winter."

"Alson, thee should have nothing but gratitude that thee is alive and strong."

"Oh, I am grateful, all right, only it's pretty tough to have to sit around doing nothing, and father having to get along without my help. You don't quite know how it makes me feel to hear him chopping alone, or to hear Charles haggling down the trees, as I know he is doing by the way his ax sounds. There was so much that I was going to show and help the Morant boys about."

"And what of the Morant girls; at least one of them?" questioned Patty mischievously.

"It doesn't look much like helping anybody," he answered gloomily. "But, as mother says, when I think of what might be I won't complain."

When the little coffin was finished Mr. Carter strapped it on Johnny's hand sled, and in company with Patty set out for Grey Wolf's wigwam. They were dressed for the weather, the father in a heavy cape coat, with the ears of his cap tied down to prevent frost-bites, a thick woolen muffler round his neck, and home-knit mittens on his hands; Patty in a quilted hood, the fur border framing her young fresh face, and snugly wrapped in her warm scarlet cloak. The day was fine and clear, a typical winter day: the patches of sky seen in the open spaces among the trees were bright and blue, the crisp crust of the snow crackled under their snowshoes, and the woods were so still that the breaking of a twig sounded sharply.

At the wigwam Grey Wolf was watching for them, his wife sat on the skins spread on

the floor beside the dead baby, silently rocking herself. As they gently raised the little form and laid it in its casket she uttered no word, though her eyes followed every movement, and when they carried it out of the wigwam she rose, drew her blanket over her head and silently followed. Frozen though the ground was Grey Wolf had made a little grave under some cedars in a little hollow near the lake, and into this the baby was lowered.

Mr. Carter had not thought of any service, but as he looked around, at the sorrowing parents, the group of half a dozen Indians gathered from some near-by wigwams, and caught the appeal in Patty's eyes, he bowed his head, "Our Father, the Great Spirit to whom this child spirit has gone, comfort these saddened hearts. Lead them to a clearer knowledge of Thee. Help us all to trust Thee, in the darkness as in the light. Amen."

He stepped to one side, motioned to the other Indians, and the frozen clods began to rattle down. The mother started at the sound; then with the realization that they were not falling on the baby a faint smile, the first one, came to her tear-stained face, "Little

body no broke," she exclaimed, and "Little body no broke!" her husband repeated with almost a joyful accent.

Mr. Carter and Patty stayed till the little grave was filled. When this was done and they were leaving, the father put his hand on Mr. Carter's arm, "Little body no broke," he murmured, "Grey Wolf not forget."

CHAPTER X

SPY! SPY! FIT TO DIE!

THE winter had worn away. The snow was still on the ground, but there was a reddened tinge to the leaf buds on the trees as though they were straining their winter wrappings, the chickens crept out to bask in a warmer sun, Johnny was listening for the first wild geese to fly over, there was a sense of expectancy in the very air. Patty had gone to Belfield and her mother was watching for her return, more and more anxiously as the shadows deepened across the snow. She had parted the curtains to look out for the last time before lighting the candle in her hand, when she saw Brown Ben and his rider emerge from the faint line between the trees which showed where the road touched the clearing. "Here she comes, now," and there was an accent of relief in her tone, while

Johnny sprang for his cap to be ready to take the horse.

Patty came in with a rush, bringing with her a keen breath of the outer air: this might have given her face its color, but there was that darkness to her eyes, the starry luster, which always came with strong excitement. Stopping abruptly she threw out her arms with an imploring gesture, "We must save him, we *must!*" her voice high and shrill.

At her entrance Alson had looked up from the ox yoke he was working on, now he was the first to speak, "If you will tell us who it is we must save, and what he is to be saved from, we will understand better."

Patty turned on him, "You needn't be so sarcastic," she flashed, "I guess if you had seen what I have you would be excited, too."

"But you must remember that we don't know what you have seen," mildly suggested her father.

"It is a soldier, an American soldier, in the Belfield jail. He has been taken as a spy, and they are going to try him as a spy, and hang him as a spy—I heard the jailer say so."

Alson's careless manner had vanished, and he was on his feet. "An American soldier? And here I am skulking like a coward! Is there nothing we can do to help? Did you speak to him, Patty?"

"I couldn't speak to him, or I didn't dare to, but I wrote to him."

"Wrote to him?" they echoed.

"Yes, that was what made me so late. It was like this," she had thrown off her cloak and hood and stood before the fire, facing them, her slim and rounded figure outlined against the blaze behind her. "I had bought the things you sent for—they are in the saddle-bags, now—and was going past the jail to the post office, when I saw a lot of boys and girls throwing snow balls at a man who stood at a window of the jail, it wasn't very cold you know to-day and the window was open. I asked one of the girls what they were doing that for and she said it was because he was a Yankee spy. Then they began to sing:

"'Yan-kee spy,
Fit to die.'"

And with that I just felt my blood boil, it

made me so mad. Just then the jailer came along and said, 'See here, what are you about?' 'Just shooting the Yankee spy,' they told him. He laughed and said it was all right if they didn't break any window, that they wouldn't have the fun much longer, for the Colonel was coming and he would have his trial next week, and then he would be hanged.

"I can tell you I felt sick when I heard that. But one thing I was sure of, I wanted him to know he had a friend there. I would have whistled 'Yankee Doodle,' but I was afraid some one there might know it, so instead I just whistled low a bar of 'Hail Columbia;' I know, mother, you think I never ought to whistle, but you see it comes handy sometimes."

"And then?" questioned Alson, as she paused.

"Oh, he looked around, surprised, and when he saw me he put up his hand as if in a military salute, and I made a little bow in return. But I was quick about it, for I didn't want any one to notice. And all the time I was wondering what I could do for him. It

seemed so dreadful, I couldn't bear that he should have to die: and I thought — I never thought so fast and hard in my life — of all the ways I had ever heard or read of men escaping from prison. As the snow balls hit the iron bars before his window I noticed that they were loose and old and rusty, and I wondered if he only had something to do it with, if he couldn't saw them off. And then all at once, Alson, I remembered that you had let me take your big pocket-knife one day to fix my saddle girth with, and I put it in the saddle bags thinking I might need it again."

"Yes," interrupted Alson, "and in place of one blade the knife has a file."

"I knew that, only I was afraid it wasn't strong enough for the work, but I didn't know of anything else. So I went to where I had fastened Brown Ben under the church shed, and got the knife. I had the silver pencil father gave me my last birthday on a cord round my neck, and I took my handkerchief, I had nothing else to write on, and I wrote on it that the file was for him to saw the bars, and asked if he thought it would do. That he must hurry, for there wasn't much time,

and I would come again soon, when he must try some way to let us know when he was ready, and we would help him if we could. I told him too, the way he must take to find us. You see I didn't know as I would have any chance to write to him again so I put it all down.

"I wrapped the knife in the handkerchief, and made a snowball around them, then I went back to the jail. This time he had his hands through the bars catching the snowballs and throwing them back—I guess he was glad to have something to do—I waited till I had caught his eye then I threw mine. I was so afraid that he wouldn't catch it, and it would fall and show what was inside, or that he would throw it back as he had the others. But he did catch it; maybe he understood from my look that it had a meaning, perhaps too, it felt different, at any rate he stepped back into the room out of sight.

"When he came back to the window in a minute he bowed, and then said: 'My friends, I can't write to you, for I have no writing material, so I shall have to tell you the pleasure you have given me; it was exactly what

I was wishing for. Come again soon and I may have something more to say.' The boys and girls all laughed and thought he meant them, but I know it was for me. So then I came away."

She paused abruptly and looked from one to another, "I didn't do wrong, did I? I couldn't do anything else. All the time I was thinking, 'What if it were Alson?' He has dark hair and eyes like Alson's. We will help him, won't we?"

"To be sure we will help him in any way we can." It was her father who spoke first.

"Poor boy, poor boy!" Mrs. Carter was softly murmuring, "No doubt he has a mother somewhere."

"I can make my cellar larger so it will hold two." As he spoke Alson was walking the floor, "I can't stand it," he burst out, "to think of sitting here and not lifting a hand. If we find out when he is ready to escape I can meet him and help him then."

"No, Alson," his father's tone was emphatic. "We will not consent to your taking any such risk. I will go to Belfield to-morrow and see what I can learn."

“Ezra, to my mind thee had best let Patty do the going into town,” remonstrated Mrs. Carter. “As thee knows, the feeling toward thee already is not any too friendly, and the very fact of thy being seen there might cause suspicion to fall on us, if the prisoner succeeds in escaping. With Patty it is different. It is nothing unusual for her to go there, and people will be less apt to think of her being concerned in the matter.”

“Oh, mother,” cried Patty, “that is just what I was feeling: besides he knows me. But do you think he can cut the bars with that little file? It is Tuesday now and he is to be tried next week. I am afraid it is too short, and it seems such a shame!”

“I think he can,” answered Alson. “If the file is small it is a good strong one. It was fortunate you had it with you.”

“Or rather providential,” corrected his mother.

“When do you think I ought to go again?” questioned Patty, “To-morrow?”

Her father thought a moment, “That is too soon, not before day after to-morrow, at any rate. He can’t have done much before

that time, and you don't want to be seen there too often."

Patty sighed as she dropped onto a chair, "Perhaps I can wait, if you think I had better, but it doesn't seem as though I could."

Her mother had been lifting the cover of the bake-kettle which stood in a corner of the fire-place, "It may be some supper will give thee more strength to wait," as she turned out the steaming loaf.

Patty gathered up her cloak and hood and hung them on one of the pegs driven in the logs at the side of the room, "I believe I am hungry, I hadn't thought of it before. In fact I hadn't thought of anything but the soldier in the prison."

Alson laughed, "Patty strikes fire as easily as flint and tinder."

"I think I know some one else who is a good deal that way," she retorted.

"There, there, children," interposed their mother, who was buttering Robby's bread, "I am afraid it must be admitted that each of my children is somewhat impulsive, but it is always well to be led by a right impulse, and I can find little fault."

"I am afraid," admitted Patty, "that it wasn't a right impulse I had when I heard those boys and girls singing:

"'Spy! Oh, spy!
Fit to die!'"

"But thee didn't yield to it," was the mother's placid comment.

CHAPTER XI

TO THE RESCUE

To the Carter household the next two days went on leaden wings. The shade of anxiety was also added, caused by a visit of Grey Wolf to Mr. Carter where he was working.

"White man heap friendly," he had said in abrupt Indian fashion, "Say 'How do, how do —' listen — look —" and he stretched his neck and peered about as though in an effort to make some discovery. "See soldiers, 'w'ss, w'ss,' " putting his hand to the side of his mouth, with a sound as if whispering, "Watch um," he concluded significantly.

"Do you mean Rayson?" was Mr. Carter's quick question.

Grey Wolf's mouth drew to a pucker, but he only repeated, "Watch um."

"Thank you for the warning, Grey Wolf," said Mr. Carter as the former, his errand done, started to go.

The Indian who had taken a few steps turned, "Little body no broke, Grey Wolf not forget."

"I didn't want to cherish evil suspicions, but I'll confess that I've had thoughts of that man which I tried to put away," was Mrs. Carter's remark, when her husband told her.

"Yes, I have noticed that he came here more often of late, and I too, had fancied sometimes that he looked about more closely than was needed. But it's pretty certain that he hasn't seen anything yet, and, as Grey Wolf says, we will 'watch um' that he does not."

Alson was looking at his foot, "It is fortunate that we wear the same-sized boots, and have had them made on the same last, so if he saw my tracks he wouldn't know them, and mother has made me a cap and coat so like yours that at a little distance it would be hard to distinguish one from the other."

"But why should Rayson do this?" asked Mrs. Carter, "We have always treated him well, and he is an American."

"Yes, but his people were Tories in the Revolution, and I don't think they have ever

had a really friendly feeling for the Yankees."

"I don't think you have touched the real reason," suggested Alson, "that is — the reward."

As it happened the very next morning the over-curious Rayson appeared again, with a trifling errand about an ax for an excuse. Patty, who was feeding the chickens outside the door, watched him with a flash in her eyes, as he scanned every footprint in the trodden snow, and made crafty efforts to peer inside the house. Suddenly her lips twitched in a smile. "Father," she called, "will you ask Mr. Rayson if Fuller's grist mill is grinding now? You know we are out of flour?"

"No," was the answer, "somethin' is wrong with the stones. It hasn't run this week."

"That's too bad," Patty's tone held an accent of vexation, "Then we will have to go to the mill in Belfield, won't we, father?"

"I don't see any other way but that, you and John will have to go. You see," he explained to his caller, "I'm pretty busy trying to get that five acres cleared this winter."

"You must miss Alson," the other quickly observed.

"Yes, I had counted on his help."

"I 'spose you don't know where he is?"

Mr. Carter struck his ax in a log and faced the man, steady-eyed, "If I did I could give information and get the reward."

In the meantime Patty had gone into the house and closing the door behind her was dancing noiselessly around the room. "And to think," in a half laugh, half-whisper, "that when Rayson came here to spy on the Yankees he should fall into a Yankee trap. I didn't say anything but the truth, either, mother, we do need flour, we always do, and there was no reason I should tell him that I knew Fuller's mill wasn't running. Father understood, and now we'll take a grist and have a good excuse for going to Belfield." She paused and her face sobered, "I can hardly wait to go and yet I dread it. What if he couldn't file the bars off? What if he has been discovered doing it and shot? I keep going over and over all the things that may have happened till it seems as if I should fly."

"Patty, child," remonstrated her mother,

"thee must learn the inward rule over the spirit."

"But how can I when it's a man's life that is at stake?"

Alson smiled, "Rule, or no rule, mother, I guess we all share Patty's feelings more or less."

Again the door opened, this time it was Johnny holding himself very tall, "Yes, Rayson's gone," in answer to an inquiry. "And father says I am to go with Patty to Bel-field, that may be I can help her."

Lucy looked at him dubiously, "I shouldn't think you'd want to go. Aren't you afraid you'll be arrested?"

"Pooh!" was the scornful retort, "I'm glad I ain't a girl; girls are always so scary."

"I think, youngster," Alson's tone was dry, "you forget that your sister Patty is a girl."

"Well," admitted Johnny, "Patty's different, but Lucy's a regular 'fraid cat,' scaret at her own shadow."

What was to be done, and every contingency likely to arise had been carefully discussed, and settled, and as Patty and Johnny were ready to start with the bag of wheat and

another of corn in the sled behind them, Mr. Carter checked them for a final word.

"I think, Patty, that you will remember everything."

"I think I shall, father."

"Be careful and prudent, I know you will do your best."

"I certainly will." And in the words Patty almost felt as if she had taken the solemn obligation of a vow.

As they neared the town she began to instruct Johnny in the part he was to play. "When we get opposite the jail I want you to touch Brown Ben with the whip just across his hind legs; that always makes him kick, and will give you an excuse to stop and get out of the sleigh. You must pretend you are fixing the harness, and while you are doing it you must whistle 'Hail Columbia.' I'm sure he will notice that."

"I'll whistle loud enough for him to," and Johnny puckered his mouth as if to have it ready.

"Then we must manage some way to throw him this doughnut, for there is a note inside

it. O dear, what if we should be too late, or something had happened!"

When the right spot was reached the little arranged programme was carried out. Johnny gave Brown Ben's legs a little flick of the whip, to which as promptly as though he knew what was expected of him, he responded by a whisk of the tail and little kick, then looked around as if to ask, "What do you want me to do next?" Johnny made a show of stopping him, and jumped out in a bustle of importance and began to refasten traces and examine buckles, whistling loudly as he did so.

There was only a moment for suspense, then an upper window opened and a face looked out. Patty glanced cautiously around; there were few passers and they seemed to have attracted no notice, and she drew a doughnut from under her cloak. "This is for you," as she spoke she held it out toward Johnny, but with a significant upward glance. She wondered — she was afraid he wouldn't understand, but quickly a voice sounded through the bars:

"Boy, could you give me a doughnut?"

"Yes, if you'll catch it you can have this," and he gave it an upward toss.

A deft hand caught the doughnut and the face disappeared, but was speedily at the window again: "Thank you," he called; "I'm all ready—" there was the slightest perceptible pause, "to eat it," he concluded.

"You're welcome," was Johnny's response as he climbed into the sleigh again, while Patty looked steadily ahead. "I'll bring you another next time I come."

"You'll have to come quick, then," remarked one of two boys who came loitering along the street, "for he's going to be hung pretty soon."

"I'll be glad when he is," said the other, "for my father's going to take me to see him hung." Then they both broke into the refrain,

"Spy! Oh, spy!
He's got to die!"

Patty shivered as she heard them, "Not if I can help it," she said to herself.

"Did I do right?" whispered Johnny as they passed on.

"Splendid. Alson himself couldn't have done better."

"And what did the doughnut say?"

"It asked if he was ready — which he answered. It told him the way to take out of town, and that we would be waiting at dark near the three big pines where the road forks. I do so hope there will be others ahead of us at the mill, so we can have a good excuse for being late."

When they reached the mill Patty found her wish granted, a number were already there waiting for their grain to be ground, and as each one was expected to wait his turn it was not till the afternoon was nearing twilight that their bags of flour and meal were ready and loaded on the sled to return.

They had started and were crossing a street, when Patty started from her mood of feverish suspense, at the sight of a familiar figure in a brass helmet — worn for comfort over a fur cap which raised it still higher — with jack boots and a sword dangling under his cape-coat. "Why Captain Morant!" she exclaimed "How do you do?"

Patty had not met Uncle Theobald face to

face since the day he had come on his prohibitory errand, but her voice was as cordial and unembarrassed as though they were the closest of friends.

He peered at them with his short-sighted eyes, "Bless me, if it isn't Patty and John Carter! Why you'll be late home, I'm afraid."

"Yes, we have had to wait and wait for our turn at the mill, till I almost thought it would never come. But I could not go home without our flour."

"That was too bad," chirped Uncle Theobald, "I would see that you had a detail of soldiers to see you safe home, only for the fact that our garrison has just been called away — just as I was getting them well drilled — and we have hardly enough left to act as night sentries for the military prisoner in charge," with a wave of his hand in the direction of the jail.

"Oh, we are not the least bit afraid," Patty assured him. "I hope Mrs. Captain Morant is well?"

"Quite well, thank you, only that like myself she is somewhat worn, as I have written

to my friends in England, the strain at this time on us military people is great indeed, although I will not repine."

"Whew!" breathed Johnny, after they had started on, "Whatever would we have done with a soldier escort?"

"Yes, and he said they had a sentinel nights, I hadn't thought of that."

"You called him 'Captain,' is he that?"

"I heard father say it was the courtesy title of a drill-master and I knew it would please him."

"But why did you speak to him at all? I wouldn't have wanted him to see us."

"Don't you understand? If there should be any suspicion how much better it is that he has seen us."

As they passed the jail again Patty thought she glimpsed a face at the cell window, but she could not be sure.

"Do you see the sentry?" she asked Johnny.

"No, yes. I guess that's him on the other side. My, I shouldn't wonder if he couldn't get away after all!"

CHAPTER XII

AN EVENING RIDE

DARKNESS was coming fast when Patty and her little brother reached the three big pines where the road forked at the edge of the forest, something more than a mile from town. The sky which had been so clear was now thickly clouded, the air had grown sharp and chill, and held the stillness which so often foretells the approach of a storm, while a few scattering flakes gave promise of what was to follow. Gradually the grey outlines of the trees faded into a black mass. Night had closed, a rising wind soughed in the top of the tall pines, and the mournful hoot of an owl sounded from a distance.

They had drawn behind some screening bushes at one side of the road, to be well out of sight should any one chance to pass, which at that hour was most unlikely. Brown Ben could not understand the unusual delay,

and stamped, impatient to be on his homeward way; to all the time went by so slowly that Johnny declared they surely had been there hours and was only convinced to the contrary when Patty opened her father's watch which she had brought with her, and feeling the hands—they dared not try for a light—assured him that it was only seven o'clock.

"What will you do if he doesn't come at all?" he questioned.

"Don't say that," her low tone was tremulous. "He must come! I'm sure God will not let them put him to death."

"Lots of men have died in the war," said Johnny, softly beating his mittened hands, for diversion as well as warmth.

"But it is different in battle," she urged.

"I guess a man has to die when his time comes to die, wherever he is," asserted the young fatalist.

"Don't talk so," she begged. "I think if he doesn't come *I* shall die."

"And I know I shall freeze. How long are you going to stay here, anyway?"

"Till I'm sure he won't come. You've done so splendidly that I should think you'd be

ashamed not to be able to wait a little while."

"Oh, I can wait all right," he grumbled down in his throat, "Only perhaps you'll feel sorry for me if I'm frozen stiff."

"Hush!" Their conversation had been hardly above a whisper, but now it dropped to silence.

Johnny snuggled closer to her side, "What was it?"

"I thought I heard —" With bent heads they held their breath, and, yes, there surely was the sound of hurried but cautious steps on the frozen road. Patty leaned forward eagerly listening, then, in a low murmur she began to hum.

"'Hail ye Heroes, heaven born band,'"

And from out of the darkness there came the response,

"'Who fought and bled on Freedom's strand.'"

"It's all right, Johnny," joyfully. Quickly he reined the horse out from the shadow of the underbrush and the dark pines into the road where a tall figure, somewhat breathless as if with running, was speedily beside them. Now that the tension of anxious suspense was

over, Patty could hardly speak for the sudden weakness that came over her, and the suffocating feeling that gripped her throat. "Are you —" for the first time it occurred to her that she did not know what to call him so she lamely finished — "the one?"

"I think I am."

"I am so glad. When I heard there was a sentry nights I was afraid he might see you."

"The sentry for the first part of the night, I learned, is the jailer's nephew and takes supper with him. And, as fortunately it came dark so early to-night, I was able to slip out at that time when no one was on duty."

"And did you make a rope of your blanket to let yourself down?" asked Johnny.

"No, I didn't want to leave any evidence behind me to show. I climbed out on the ledge of a window below mine, dropped from that to the window sill, and so to the ground."

"I hope they have not missed you," Patty was tingling again with a sense of possible danger, "Get in behind," she directed. "Lie down — close to the bags, here is a blanket and wolf-skin robe to cover you. And now," to Johnny, "let Brown Ben go."

Neither boy nor horse needed a second bidding, and the light sled with its load fairly skimmed the frozen road, while the snowflakes came thicker around them. Their passenger lay as still and silent as one of the bags of meal, and though Patty's heart beat fast and she looked around more than once to learn if there might be any sight or sound of pursuit, hardly a word was spoken by either her or Johnny, till across the open clearing the welcome home lights shone. Then, with thoughts of his stable, Brown Ben broke into a gallop, and with a clatter they drew up before the cabin. Already the door had opened at the slight crunching the runners made, and Mr. Carter was awaiting them.

"Yes, father, yes," Patty whispered as though caution were still needful. "It's all right. We have what we went for. He's here safe and alive." And turning she spoke in a louder tone, "We are home now; you are safe."

"And among friends," added her father.

At this announcement the young man threw off his coverings and stepped to the ground, Mr. Carter gave him a grasp of the hand, then

took charge of Brown Ben, bidding Johnny go in and get warm, while Patty caught the young man's sleeve and hurriedly drew him inside.

A bright fire blazed in the wide fireplace and cast a ruddy glow on the hewed walls which formed the side walls, and the brown beams of the rafters above; a roast of venison simmered on the hearth before the fire, an iron tea-kettle hanging from the crane sent out puffs of steam, singing the while; a whitely spread table stood waiting, peace, cheer, comfort were in the very air. With a glance the spy gathered all this in, and what was more than all else, the friendly faces that stood waiting and smiling. His eyes grew misty, he tried to speak but his voice broke, then it strengthened, "I was a stranger and ye took me in," he exclaimed, his accent telling the depth of his emotion, "I don't know why you have done all this for me, but whatever the reason, God bless and reward you for it."

"I can tell you the reason —" Alson had stepped forward and had gripped his hand, "It is because we, too, are Americans."

"Then I am among friends indeed. And

because you are friends, ought I to allow you to put yourself in this danger for me? I was wondering over this as I was coming. 'Tis a death penalty, I have been told."

"Never trouble yourself," responded Alson, "the penalty is already incurred, we can die but once. You don't understand, I will explain. Know then that this family, of Ezra Carter and his wife, have committed the crime of giving refuge to their son — myself — who stands charged as a deserter from the British army."

He paused and laughed bitterly, "I know you think that sounds like a coward; but I'm not a coward. It would have been easier to fight than to have them think I didn't dare to, and to go through what I had to. But I was forced into the army against my protest, and rather than in any way help against the Americans I ran away and here I am."

"As an American I can but honor and admire you for it," heartily rejoined the other.

"So you see," continued Alson, "this you have come to is not the safest place in the world. It has already been searched by the soldiers three times, and very likely will be

again. But at least it is better than a cell in a prison."

"And with a death sentence staring you in the face. A deserter and a spy can well keep each other company, neither are pretty words of themselves, I'll admit, but there are times when the end sanctions the means."

"I mind me," Mrs. Carter paused with her hand on the teakettle, "that Moses sent spies into the Land of Canaan, and certain of them have a most honorable record."

"And are you really a spy?" questioned Johnny, who stood listening and rubbing his hands before the fire.

"Yes, my boy, I have to plead guilty, as I should have been judged guilty. But I am also a soldier, and a soldier obeys orders whether they are his choice or not. So when my commanding officer detailed me to obtain certain information I accepted the duty—I had been at the battle of Niagara, at which time I learned certain facts in regard to the country—I gained what he wanted and sent it to him, then I saw the chance to gain more, and, well, mischance brought me to Belfield jail."

"And so you are a soldier?" Johnny's face had kindled.

"Yes, I am Lieutenant Morris Wolcott, of the New York line. But the British do not know this. It chanced that I had my commission in my pocket when I was taken, but before I was searched I managed to tear it in bits, and chewed it bit by bit. I was determined that if I died they should never know who or what I was, or my own friends the end I had met."

"That was great!" exclaimed Johnny, "Wasn't it, Patty?"

He turned to where she sat, half hidden by the high-backed settle. "Why, if Patty isn't crying! What in the world are you crying for now, Patty, when everything has come out all right?"

She gave a little choke and dashed away her tears, "Oh, I was so afraid it wouldn't be all right!"

"Well, I must say that is a queer way to do," was Johnny's comment.

"Hush, John," as his mother spoke she smoothed back Patty's tumbled hair, "thee doesn't understand."

Lieutenant Wolcott crossed the floor, "I haven't thanked these young people, and this one in particular," laying his hand on Patty's shoulder. "In fact I don't know what words to say in return for a life. The future looked pretty dark, and I had about abandoned hope when she came like an angel of cheer. I don't think you can ever know how I felt when I heard that American air, and realized that there was some one to help me if possible, and at any rate to give me the help and strength of sympathy. I knew she was taking a risk in what she was doing, and why she should do it I couldn't tell."

Patty looked up quickly, "Now you have seen Alson you know. I kept thinking, what if it were he? And it seemed that I should die if you were not saved."

While Mrs. Carter had been talking and listening she had been setting the waiting food on the table, "Now I know that Friend Wolcott is hungry as well as tired, as are also Patty and John, so eat first, and then thee can talk all thee chooses."

CHAPTER XIII

THE TALK BY THE FIRE

SUPPER over, they gathered around the fire, Mr. Carter with the rest, "The storm is increasing," he had said as he came in stamping his feet and shaking himself. "You reached home none too soon, and we are fortunate in having the snow to conceal your traces. Indeed it is much such a night as that when Alson came last fall."

"I only hope the storm will delay my being missed," observed Wolcott.

"That reminds me," Alson spoke, "I had forgotten to ask if you had much trouble cutting the bars?"

"Very little, they were badly rusted. But you ought to have heard me sing while I was doing it. I sung everything I ever heard, and at the top of my voice, to cover the noise I made."

"Well," Mr. Carter's tone was one of re-

lief, "I'm glad it all ended as it has. I tell you these have been anxious days. And they were all afraid if I did anything that I would spoil matters, so we had to leave our part in Patty's hands."

"It could not well have been in more capable hands," acknowledged Lieutenant Wolcott.

Patty heard a throat clear beside her. "You mustn't forget how much Johnny helped me to-day."

"That's true," assented Alson. "From all you say Bub did nobly."

"I just wish you'd never call me 'Bub' again!" With Johnny's swelling sense of importance this outrage to his sensitive spot was more than he could endure without protest.

"I never will," answered Alson. "You have won your spurs. John Carter it shall be from this day forward."

Mrs. Carter cuddled Robby up to her side, "I understood thee to say, Friend Wolcott, that thee came from New York, we also are from that State."

"Yes, I had just been admitted to the bar and was there looking for a good place to

locate, so I enlisted from there, but my home and people are in Virginia. My father was in the Revolution; the first thing I remember is of sitting on his knee while he told me stories of the war. I grew up on a diet of military history, and when this war came, why, it was as natural for me to take part in it as for those sparks to fly up the chimney. I could hardly wait to reach the Niagara frontier for fear the battle would already be fought."

"And that battle was a sad affair."

"It was more than sad, it was shameful," his voice rose earnest, vibrant. "I was one of those who filled the thirteen boats which pushed out into the river in the early dusk of that October morning. It was no easy task we had, the current was strong, the stream full of eddies, the enemy's fire rapid and well aimed. But we reached the beach, formed a line, drove the British back, and when, halting to rest, we were cheered to the echo from the American shore, and four hundred more troops came to join us, why, we thought victory was to be ours. But you know the rest," and he paused abruptly.

"I know something," answered Alson, "for

I, too, was there. Not in the battle, I was kept at work on the fortifications; I know the British side, and now I am glad to hear it from the American standpoint."

"If you were there, you know then how the British rallied, and General Van Rensselaer was wounded in four places. And how, led by Captain Wool, the Americans climbed the steep heights, captured the battery there, and surprised Brock and his soldiers so they barely escaped capture by running down the hill toward Queenstown. The first attack to dislodge us we beat back. In the second General Brock fell dead at the foot of the slope. Then with reinforcements the way would have been clear to Queenstown—it makes me sick to think of it," he had risen and was walking up and down the room. "And to think of it, that not a man came! Officer after officer went to the bank, shouted and beckoned to them to come over. Van Rensselaer, wounded though he was, crossed and implored them."

"But why didn't they come?" questioned John, wide-eyed and intent.

"Because they were cowards, my boy. They had been clamoring for a battle, but the

sight of one cooled all their ardor: now they said they were militia, that they couldn't be sent outside the United States. So there they stood, on the other shore of that narrow river, and saw their own countrymen overpowered by numbers, driven back foot by foot, to the edge of the cliff, then down the side to the river bank. Even in this extremity no one would so much as row a boat across. Many, as I did, jumped into the river, part were so fortunate as to reach the other shore safely, others went down under the swift current. The six hundred who remained could do nothing but surrender."

Alson had listened with kindling interest, "Yes, I saw the men trying to escape by swimming the river. The current brought some of them within rifle range of the battery at Vrooman's Point where I was then. One of the men of the company raised his piece to fire, when Vrooman, who was helping man the battery, threw up the gun, 'Shame on you!' he cried indignantly. 'None but a coward would fire upon men thus struggling for their lives.' " He paused, his voice choking. "Never, as long as I live shall I forget

that day, or what I suffered, powerless to help. One thing I resolved then and there, to make my escape at the first opportunity, and I did."

"And so proved yourself an American. But I tell you," and Wolcott's eyes kindled, "if all had shared the spirit of young Colonel Scott the affair would have ended very differently. With his troop he had just arrived the night before and was going into camp above the Falls. I had been sent there with a message, so told him of the impending battle, and without a stop he hurried on with his men. The next I saw of him was on Queenstown Heights in a perfect blaze of fire, head and shoulders above every other man."

"I heard an English officer say he was the finest specimen of a man he ever saw."

"He is that. And when the Indians came, hideous in their war paint and feathers, with their tomahawks and terrible war-whoops, driving in the pickets and throwing the militia into such confusion they were ready to run, Scott appeared, and by his very presence inspired them, so they raised a shout, drove the Indians back, and later when they rallied for

another assault drove them from the Heights. Yes, and when the Indians had killed the officer with the flag of truce for surrender, Scott took a white cravat on the point of his sword and started with another officer when two Indians met and sprang on them like tigers, fired their guns, and drew their tomahawks. There is no telling how it would have ended, but a British soldier and guard saw the encounter, rushed forward crying 'Honor, honor!' and took the Americans under their protection."

"One of those Indians," said Alson, "was John Brant, son of the great Mohawk warrior and ally of the British during the Revolution; though only eighteen he is *Tekarihogea*, or head chief of the Mohawks, and the Six Nations living in Canada."

"Well, he missed his victim that time. Colonel Scott is a prisoner now, I suppose, but we shall hear more of him, that is if no harm befalls him. I was told that the Indians tried again to kill him the night after the battle, though why they should I do not know."

"I think I can explain that," answered Alson. "I had been ordered to help carry some of the wounded to Newark [now Niag-

ara], so I saw the last assault though I didn't know the name of the officer. After the battle the Americans were marched to Newark, and the officers quartered in a small tavern. It was here that a little girl went into the parlor and said that somebody in the hall wanted to see the 'tall officer.' He came out into the hall unarmed, and there met John Brant, and Jacob, one of his underchiefs. Brant asked how many balls had passed through his clothes, as they had both fired at him constantly, and been astonished not to see him fall. The other took hold of him rudely, and tried to turn him about, saying, 'Me shoot so often, me sure to have hit somewhere.' Scott indignantly thrust him away, 'Hands off, you villain!' he exclaimed, 'You fired like a squaw.' With that both loosened their knives and tomahawks from their belts, 'We kill you now,' Jacob cried. Scott rushed to the end of the hall where the arms of the captured officers stood, seized a sword, drew it from its scabbard and was about to strike when an English officer caught Jacob and shouted for the guard. Jacob still called "I'll kill you!" and Scott with sabre raised returned,

‘If you strike, I’ll kill you both!’ It all lasted but a moment, then the Indians put up their weapons and slowly went out, muttering curses on all white men, and all laws of war.”

“But why did they do it?”

“Oh, Brant was infuriated, wild, at the loss of his warriors, and from what you tell me I can see that he held Scott responsible.”

“He acted like a savage.”

“That was the effect of war. I had seen him before, a pleasant young fellow, well educated, speaking English perfectly, dressed in English fashion except when some occasion required the Mohawk costume: and I confess it was hard to realize that he and that battle-crazy savage, painted and plumed from head to foot in Indian style, were the same. But then there’s more or less savage in all of us, and war brings it out.”

His mother folded her knitting, “I’m glad to hear thee admit so much, my son.”

“Oh, I don’t deny that. War is a mighty touchstone; all that is noble and generous and best, all that is mean and cowardly and worst in a man comes to the surface then,” replied Alson.

"I agree with you," Lieutenant Wolcott was looking around, "You tell me the soldiers have searched for you three times, you must have been securely hidden to have escaped them."

"It was this little woman," and Alson laid his hand on his mother's arm. "Every time they have come she has put that little wheel on the board that opens into my hiding-place under the floor and sat there and spun till they were gone. Oh, we have a regular programme for them now. Father goes to work as far away as he has time to get."

"They are afraid my temper may get beyond bounds and make trouble for us," Mr. Carter explained.

"And mother spins," continued Alson, "and Lucy weeps."

"I didn't so much the last time," protested Lucy.

"And Patty looks daggers — sometimes she utters a few: John splits kindlings and keeps on the lookout; and the baby — bless him," with a tender glance toward the curly head, "doesn't know what it means at all. So you see we have various parts, there is

Courage, Prudence, Fear, Defiance, Watchfulness, Innocence."

"And what part do you play?"

"Oh, I lie still and low. I'm simply the Object. I'll own it's a singular sensation, though, to hear the soldiers walking around over your head hunting for you. But I must show you the retreat as it is to be yours as well." And lifting the board he held the lighted candle above the little cellar which had now been made deeper and larger.

"I'm sure," said Wolcott, "that's inviting beside a cell in a prison."

Mrs. Carter had risen, "I think Friend Wolcott is weary enough to try what rest it offers. See John, too, he is almost asleep."

CHAPTER XIV

FIRE IN THE FALLOW

THE snowstorm of that night proved to be the last heavy snow of the winter, and under the warming spring suns had all soon vanished. The sugar-making was past, the leaf-buds on the trees gave promise of speedy unfolding, robins and bluebirds were in the woods, the sense of springtime, gladness, freedom, were on every side.

It was a grey day, wisps of smoke-like fog hung over the lake and trailed through the tops of the trees. Mr. Carter and Johnny had gone to another part of the town to help a neighbor whose cabin had burned, to build a new one: a peaceful silence brooded over the clearing, Mrs. Carter had drawn her wheel to the open door which looked out toward the road, just inside Lieutenant Wolcott was whittling a boat for Rob, Lucy was busy with her patchwork, Alson had slipped out to the

barn and was mending the handle to a plough.

There was a sound of steps and Patty, who had been making a search for "greens" stood in the doorway, "Alson, do you see that smoke across the lake? I thought at first it was the fog but it grows blacker and denser all the time. The Morants' cedar swamp must be on fire. Charles and Ermina have gone over to McDonald's to the 'raising,' I know; and it doesn't seem possible that he could have set a fire and gone off and left it, especially with a wind like this. Any one ought to know better than that without much experience."

Alson was already looking from the doorway across the lake where the clouds of smoke were constantly rolling thicker and blacker. "There certainly is a fire, and a bad one too. What could Charles have been thinking of to fire the 'fallow'?"

Suddenly he whirled around, "Is Margaretta there alone?"

"Why yes, she must be."

"Alone," he cried. "My God! and with that fire spreading every moment. Who knows it may reach the house, she may be in

danger of burning to death. She must have help at once."

"Where are you going?" asked Patty as he pushed past her, though in her heart she already knew.

"I am going to her."

"Oh, Alson, think, you may be seen, it may cost your life if you go!"

"It doesn't matter if I am seen, or what it costs. I am not going to sit here and hold my hands while Margaretta is in such great danger. You know what a forest fire may mean."

As he spoke, he was walking rapidly down toward the water. "And where are you going?" he asked as Patty kept close beside him.

"I'm going where you go," was her answer, "to do what I can, too. There," as he unfastened the canoe and pushed it into the lake, "if you must go, lie down in the bottom and I will paddle."

For a moment he hesitated, then as the wind blew the fog aside red tongues of flame could be seen shooting up from the tangle of felled cedars in the swamp. Alson uttered an

exclamation, "The fire is spreading fast, give me a paddle, Patty. I tell you we've no time to lose! With this wind and everything as dry as it is, there's no telling what mischief it may do if it gets beyond control. More to the right — so, we must strike for that little creek, or we cannot get through the fire."

Patty knew that it would be useless to oppose him, so without a word she yielded one of the blades, and they paddled swiftly and steadily, pushing up into the little creek through the trees blazing on either side, and making a landing in the rear of the fire.

They had seen the red wall of flame bordering the lake; now as they hastily climbed the bank of the creek and came in sight of the house Patty gave a cry of dismay. The grass of last year's growth was all about them tall and dry, and through this straight towards the house a red line of fire was advancing by leaps and bounds.

Margaretta with the long-handled fire shovel was frantically beating at the advancing flames, but by the time she had one spot out, the rest of the line was shooting forward. At the sight of Patty she gave a cry of joy,

then as she saw Alson she ran toward him, forgetful for the moment of the threatening danger.

"Go back, go back!" she cried. "You mustn't come here. Patty, take him away. Take him away quick! Somebody may come and see him! Why did you let him come?"

"I couldn't help it. I tried not to have him but he would."

Alson had been hastily cutting some pine branches, "How did the fire start?" he asked utterly ignoring her plea.

"It was that boy Charles has had. He had heard him talk of burning it off, and to-day, before I knew it, he had started the fire in a dozen places. Then when he saw what he had done he was frightened and ran away."

"I see. Here is a branch for each of you, we must work hard to keep the fire from the house."

"Oh, Alson," Margaretta begged, "what if some one should come and find you here? I was frightened almost to death at the fire, and I'm more frightened for you. Think how I would feel if you lost your life by coming here?"

"See here, Margaretta," he replied between pauses of working, "I don't think there is a man within six miles to see me; they have all gone to the 'raising.' McDonald's is over the ridge, I doubt if they even see the smoke from there. What is done we have got to do ourselves. And under any circumstances do you think I could have stayed away when you were in peril?"

Margaretta did not answer. Patty had caught the branch he tossed to her and was working with might and main. "Beat it quite out," Alson directed. "If you leave a spark it will spring up again."

And still in spite of all their efforts that sea of flame came on, springing up in unexpected places, leaping, darting, with licking tongues, as something alive and hungry for its prey. "The house will burn in spite of us," panted Margaretta.

"No, it shall not," Alson spoke through shut teeth.

The heat was now stifling, the flames scorched their faces, their lips were parched, the smoke half blinded and choked them, and still, for all their effort, the threatening points



E THREATENING POINTS OF FLAME KEPT SPRINGING ONWARD.
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of flame kept springing onward. The wind too, was rising, and burning leaves and bits of bark began to fall around them and on the roof of the house. Margaretta lifting her eyes gave a cry, "See, the roof is on fire!"

Alson stopped, "Get me a blanket, quick!"

"But there is no water in the house, I used what there was on the fire."

"Then I'll do what I can," and hastily climbing the corner logs of the house, he beat the little flame out, almost with his hands. Then he was down again and beating at the line of flame, now broken and wavering, but yet making an advance wherever possible. Soon the conquered spaces grew wider, and at last, hardly a yard from the doorstep, there stretched a black and smoking line, but no longer ablaze.

They all paused panting, and Margaretta sank down with a sobbing breath of relief, though the scene which remained, and towards which they now turned their eyes was terrible enough. The fallen cedars in the swamp were a seething mass of fire, which had caught in the trees standing near and enveloped them like huge torches, while the wind, now risen

almost to a hurricane, roared through the tree tops and added to the terror of the spectacle. "Isn't it dreadful?" exclaimed Patty, with a shudder.

"Dreadful," echoed Margaretta. "Do you know I had heard so much of logging, and burning off a fallow, that when I first saw the fire I did not dream of danger, not till it began to come toward the house and I found that I couldn't stop it. Just before you came I thought everything would have to go, and I would be burned up too. Once I even sat down on the step and felt it was useless to try any longer, and I might as well accept my fate, only it seemed such a terrible one."

"And yet you wanted to send me back." Alson was not looking at Margaretta but at the spreading fire.

"Because you are in danger every moment you stay. Can you understand how I would feel if harm came to you because you had risked yourself for me?"

"And can you understand how I would feel if harm came to you because I had not risked myself? I don't see," he added, "but the fire in the swamp will have to burn itself out. If

the wind were only away from the house it wouldn't so much matter."

"But see!" cried Patty, "the wind is driving it around to the other side of the house."

"I know, there is the danger. Margaretta you had better let us take you down to the beach of the lake, there you will be safe."

"No, I shall stay by the house as long as it is in danger, and do what I can to save it. I will not leave our home."

The heavy canopy of smoke had obscured the sky, and they had not noticed or even seen the cloud that had been rising, and all started as a loud crash of thunder burst directly over their heads, followed by a pouring torrent of rain.

"Oh, the rain, the blessed rain!" cried Margaretta, "I never was so glad before to see it. The very clouds are fighting for us."

"Yes, this will check the spread of the fire."

"And now please, please do go."

Patty glanced in her brother's face then she turned and walked away toward the canoe.

"Yes, I'm going, Margaretta," Alson's voice was husky. "And God only knows when or if ever I shall see you again. As

soon as it's possible I shall make the attempt to leave Canada — and all it holds for me.”

“I'm sure that is best,” she choked and recovered herself bravely. “I hope — oh, I hope, you will make it safely!”

“I hope so, too. If I do sometime I shall come again. But whatever happens, God bless you now and always.” He put out his hands and caught hers for a moment. Then without a word he turned and ran through the driving rain down to the canoe where Patty sat waiting for him.

CHAPTER XV

THE GOING

MAY had come, the trees were green, violets starred the new grass in the clearing; the undergrowths had thickened, there were shelters now, lurking-places for birds, and timid wood creatures, and man as well.

From the day of Alson's home-coming it had been his intention as soon as he could to try to reach the American line. Lieutenant Wolcott shared his anxious longing, and their constant talk and plans had been towards this end. Now they decided that the time had come to make the attempt, and Mr. Carter who had been urging against an unseasonable start agreed with them. All along they had been making ready, but now there was the stir of final preparation; for no one knew what might lie before the fugitives, and they must set out as well equipped as possible.

The last day had come, the bags of bread

and jerked venison were ready, a rifle for each had been carefully cleaned, fresh bullets had been run, the powder horns filled. The young men had put on their new fringed hunting suits, with buckskin leggings and moccasins, and as they came out in these and stood up side by side for inspection Johnny's eyes were almost envious. For were they not going forth to plunge into the forest for a journey of days and nights, where who knew what manner of thrilling adventures and dangers might wait? Besides these allurements, it certainly was prosaic in the extreme to have to stay safely at home and plant potatoes and watch the cows that they did not stray away.

But he did not express anything of this. Oh, no, he merely looked them over with a slight uptilting of his small freckled nose, and casually observed that he supposed they thought they looked mighty fine.

"And why shouldn't we think so?" asked Lieutenant Wolcott, "after all the pains your mother and sister have taken to make these suits? We do look fine, don't we?" appealing to Patty.

It was a direct question and for an instant Patty glanced up from under her down-dropped lashes. The sun shone brightly outside, but it was a misty day for her as well as the others. Though all knew it was a step on which Alson's safety depended, the wrench was no less hard: and Lieutenant Wolcott in the weeks he had been with them, by his simple manliness, his unfailing courtesy and kindness, his gay endurance of the constraint of conditions, had won for himself in varying degrees a warm place in the hearts of all the household. What she did think as she looked from one to the other was that two finer-looking young men could not ~~easily~~ be found. But Patty did not say that, oh, no. Only her cheek reddened, and her mother, whose glance was on her, came to the rescue.

"Fie, Friend Wolcott, I did not think thee would ever be vain of thy dress: and begging for flattery, too!" And at this they all laughed. For that matter they all laughed a great deal that day, though no one could have confessed to any great lightness of heart.

"They do look fine, both of them," Mr. Carter spoke with emphasis. "Just as Ameri-

can boys should. For my part, I'm proud of them."

Patty gave her father a grateful look. She had a good excuse for not talking as she and her mother were both busy about the supper, for of course the last meal at home must be an extra one. "Won't I wait anxiously for some of mother's cooking again?" Alson remarked as he watched her as she put some biscuit in the tin "Dutch oven" before the fire to bake, then turned the turkey roasting in front of the blaze, while Patty fitted the pink slices of venison upon the long-handled broiler.

Lieutenant Wolcott was walking softly up and down the room in his new moccasins, shortening his steps to little Robby's, whose chubby hand was clasped about his finger. "I was thinking, my friends," he said, "that I don't know that it has ever occurred to you, but in all the weeks I have been here, never once have you mentioned, or seemed to realize the fact, that your giving me shelter has added to your own danger or difficulties; but it is something, I assure you, that I shall not forget."

Mrs. Carter paused before him, a big spoon in her hand, "Friend, I cannot let thee speak so. In the weeks thee has been with us thee has come to seem to me almost like another son, and it is a mother's pleasure to do for her children."

"I am sure no mother could have done more for me."

"And for anything we may have been able to give thee in the way of shelter, Ezra and I feel more than paid in that Alson will now have company in the journey before him. Besides, thee has helped us all by the cheerful spirit with which thee has accepted the irksomeness of the life thee has been obliged to lead."

"Now, mother, who is flattering?" laughed Mr. Carter.

"I only spoke the truth as I was moved to speak it," she rejoined with a little flutter of her cap strings,—the only visible sign of the great emotion with which she was struggling.

They were not to start till darkness had well set in. As the dusk was gathering Alson beckoned to Patty and as she followed him out of the house they walked side by side

down the path they had so often taken together to the lake.

"Have you seen Margaretta lately?" he asked abruptly.

"Not so very."

"How plainly we can see over there, now the cedar swamp has been cut and burned away."

"Yes."

He stood still looking across the lake, "How differently everything has happened from what we expected! When the Morants came I planned so much that we would do and enjoy together. I thought we would live side by side as neighbors for years, perhaps always, and now —" he paused and sighed. "I wrote a letter to Margaretta, but finally I tore it up."

"That was best for you and her both."

"When you see Margaretta tell her —"

"I don't need to tell her anything," she interrupted. "Margaretta is a girl. Girls know some things without having to be told."

Alson did not speak, and Patty, left to her own thoughts, winked back the tears as she looked off at the gray shades creeping over

the water. In that hour life stretched before her hardly less heavy and grey. She had resolutely put from her the thought of the days that were to come, but suddenly the realization of them came upon her like an unbearable burden, and she dropped her face in her hands.

The warm pressure of a hand was laid on her arm. "Oh, I know I'll live through it, Alson!" she sobbed, "People live through everything, but I don't quite see how I am going to."

"Be sure yours is not the only heavy heart to-night."

She started for the voice was not Alson's. "I don't know that I have ever thanked you for saving my life," Morris Wolcott continued, "I want to before I go."

"You don't need to." Patty's tone was crisp, she was angry, humiliated that he should have surprised her in tears. "It was nothing. I did no more for you than I would have done for any one." She had slipped apart from him as elusive as the mist over the water.

He took a step nearer, "It may have been

nothing to you but it was a great deal to me. There are some debts we are glad to owe, and I am glad to owe this to you."

But Patty was already hurrying up the path, "I think mother will be needing me," she murmured. She might have added that she was a girl, and there are some things that a girl in her shyness shrinks from having told.

The evening promised well for their purpose. It was moonless and the stars were veiled by low-hanging clouds. Few words were spoken as they sat waiting for the time to start; a candle burned dimly on the stand, and the little wheel, which had so well served its purpose, stood silent against the wall. Then when darkness had settled close, and the night-time brooding over had blotted out the features of the world, a canoe, its paddles wound with cloth to make them still more noiseless, slipped softly out and away from the little sandy beach. There was no sound of voices, the parting words had been low whispers, hand clasps make no sound, and the watchers, straining their eyes to see as the boat and its precious freight vanished from them, were silent.

Mr. Carter was to take the fugitives through the little chain of lakes that they might have the advantage of a start as far from home as possible, and also avoid the risk of being seen and recognized in the neighborhood; for there was still a belief that Alson was hidden somewhere about his home.

It was the broadening light of morning when he returned, the birds were singing in the pines which bordered the lake, the water rippled with a silvery sheen, a fishing pole trailed over the side of the canoe, and a string of fish dangling at the bow told to any one who might see him the peaceful nature of the errand that had been his.

CHAPTER XVI

ANOTHER PARTING

THE next time Patty met Margaretta she threw her arms about the latter's neck with a little sobbing breath. Margaretta held her close, she knew what the action meant. "Of course you have not heard from him?"

"That is the worst of it. To think that we may not hear a word for months, years; if he should fail, perhaps never."

Margaretta's voice was not quite steady when she spoke again. "But he will not fail, I'm sure he will not. And besides you have the comfort that he did not go alone."

Patty lifted her head and looked at Margaretta with widening eyes, "How did you know?"

"I didn't *know*, but I felt certain. Uncle Theobald chanced to mention seeing you in Belfield the same evening the spy made his escape. He was an American, I knew you

would help him if you could, and I was sure you had found a way to do it."

"Does any one suspect?"

"I think not. Uncle Theobald certainly didn't, but then he doesn't know you as well as I do."

"And you never mentioned this!"

Margaretta smiled, "Really it was hardly a matter to mention." She did not add that there were a hundred questions she longed to ask, nor Patty that there were a hundred things she longed to tell; already they had both seen and learned the need of prudence and self-restraint. "I hope I can tell you all about it sometime," was all Patty said, and Margaretta nodded that she understood.

"Nor is that all my trouble," Patty went on, "You know the age of those who may be called on for military service has been increased to include all from sixteen to sixty, so father can now be taken at any time. Besides he has refused to take the oath of allegiance to the king, and since that we have seen signs more and more that a feeling is growing against him, in fact against all of us, and nobody knows how or in what way it may end."

Margaretta could not reassure her friend, for she knew it was all true. Ever since the invasion of Canada by American troops the sentiment against Americans had been steadily growing, which the attack on Toronto the month previous had but intensified in their vicinity. And Mr. Carter's convictions he could neither cloak nor hide from motives of policy.

All through the summer this state of affairs continued and increased, friends dropped away, acquaintances stood aloof; of those who at the beginning of the war had been in outspoken sympathy with the American cause many had changed or pretended to change, not a few had found it the part of wisdom quietly to disappear. Over and over the question of what it was best for them to do was discussed by Mr. Carter and his wife, for with their family a decisive move was not easy.

It was a question still undecided when one September evening Charles Morant suddenly appeared in the door. "Mr. Carter," he began abruptly, without heeding the invitation to enter, "you have been a good friend to us, and that is why I am here. Oliver has

just come with orders from the government to arrest all those who have refused to take the oath of allegiance: and —” looking from one to another of the faces suddenly grown so tense, “I am sorry to say that your name is on the list.” With that he turned and as quickly as he had come he was gone.

Not a word had been spoken, and a brief silence held them like a spell. Mr. Carter was the first to break it, “Well, mother, you have urged me to wait for the leading, and it has come.”

“And now thee can but follow it.” As she spoke she rose, “Patty, how much bread have we on hand?”

“Plenty, I baked the oven full yesterday.”

“That is well, now let us see what needs to be done.”

There was no time for forebodings or regrets, all were busy making ready for the hurried departure now inevitable. Mr. Carter alone sat motionless resting his head on his hands. “I feel like a coward,” he groaned, at last looking up, “to go and leave my family alone, unprotected. It is something I never dreamed of doing.”

His wife paused to lay her hand tenderly on his shoulder. "Truly not, Ezra, this war is something none of us dreamed of, or we would not be here. And it is not a question of going or staying,—in any case you must leave us,—it is simply in what way you will go."

"Why can't we hide father as we did Alson?" urged Johnny. "Then he could stay at home."

"I could not help you any, son, and I might bring great trouble and danger on you all."

"And I am afraid I could not always make my spinning wheel a shield." Mrs. Carter glanced at the little flax wheel in its corner. "The last time the soldiers searched the house you know the officer asked me if I was always spinning?"

Patty looked up from her father's socks that she was sorting over, "Yes, and when you told him that the Indians called you Nono-cosiqui — the humming bird, because you spun so much, he said no more."

"And have no fears for us," Mrs. Carter's tone was full of assurance, "no one, I am sure, will molest a woman and children."

"No, I think not. The warrior Indians are away with the British, and those that remain around here have always been our firm friends; besides we have just had proof that whoever fails, you can depend on the Morants."

Before Alson left, it had been agreed that as soon as they could the family would all return to American soil. Where they should try to meet had been a matter for much discussion, and had been finally decided in favor of the location of which Uncle James had written, Cleveland, on the shore of Lake Erie. This was in Mrs. Carter's mind as she answered.

"Friends or no friends, when thee is gone we too shall leave here as soon as possible."

"I have been thinking of that, and that perhaps your best way will be to wait till sleighing comes in the early winter. You will need to take some things with you, and traveling, especially over most of these roads, will be much easier on runners than wheels. In fact you will have to depend on Brown Ben, and the only wagon we have is far too heavy for him alone."

"We might take the oxen," suggested John.

"Yes, under some circumstances they would be all right, but I hardly think they will be best now. Oxen are slow travelers, and once you are started the sooner you are across the American line the better."

Mrs. Carter nodded, "Thee is right, and do not thee fret about our being able to do it. Only where shall we meet?"

"The Niagara River is the nearest place for you to cross, and I am told that there is a ferry across to Black Rock, which is on the American side near Buffalo. I will wait for you there." He did not add, "if I make a safe escape," but the unspoken thought was in his mind, as it was in all their minds.

As he spoke Mr. Carter rose and taking one of the two remaining guns from its hooks examined it carefully, "Now let us see as to the ammunition. John, you can run some more bullets; you will have to be the hunter for the family now, and remember what I have told you, always be sure to take a good aim before you fire."

"Yes sir, I will," and John stood very erect

with visions before him of the deer and wild turkeys he would bring into the family larder.

"Now bring me the powder flask," directed his father, and unscrewing the top he poured the black grains into his powder horn. "I'm afraid I'm not leaving you much," as he looked in it.

"Never mind, take it all, father," urged Patty. "We can get some more the next time we go to Belfield."

"I'll leave you enough for a couple of charges. It may not be best for you to go to town right away. I am afraid what I am doing will not win favor for you."

When his equipment was ready Mr. Carter took from a home-made desk in a corner of the room a worn leather wallet and handed it to his wife. "I'm sorry I haven't more money to leave you, but perhaps you can manage with that."

Without speaking she took the wallet, and counted out its contents in two little heaps. "Here," and she pushed one toward him, "thee must take this and ' will the other."

"No, Mary," he remonstrated, "I am a man, I can get along some way."

"Thee knows not what thy needs may be," she answered firmly.

"And you?"

"We have wheat and corn and the garden. We can live, if it be simply. Do not trouble about us."

"And the wheat is not threshed or the corn cut up."

Johnny rolled up his sleeves, "I can thresh the wheat and cut up the corn."

"That's right, my boy, always be willing to try. I wish," he added, "that we could have sold this place."

"Perhaps we can. I'll try."

"Rayson would like it, but he wants it for nothing; and look out for him, too, that he doesn't work you any harm. Yes, I wish we could sell. It would give us something to make another start. Not that I am afraid. Land, they say, is cheap in 'the Ohio,' and if I have my life and health I can soon make us another home, and Alson, too, will help."

"But what if we never see Alson again, or you either, father," suddenly wailed Lucy, whose fortitude had reached its limit.

"Of course we shall see them again," an-

swered Patty cheerfully. But under cover of the tall settle she gave Lucy a shake that was by no means gentle. "Hush, I'm ashamed of you," she whispered. "And if you say another word like that I'll — I'll fill your mouth with tow," her threat following her eyes which had rested on the little wheel and its spindle.

In a little while all was ready; the provision, the blanket for the cool nights, the extra moccasins, the few necessities that could be taken. As Mr. Carter had done for Alson and Wolcott, so Patty and Johnny were to take him in the canoe as far as possible. There was little lingering for good-byes, every hour had its value; the only tears were those of Lucy, who, after Patty's outburst had sobbed on as softly as possible, but the only light heart was Robby's, who, too young to understand, was gleefully chasing Rover around the room, his bedtime quite forgotten.

In all her after life Patty never forgot that night's trip. As with steady paddle strokes they swept silently on over the darkened water, with the black masses of the pine clad shores lifting dimly on either side, it seemed to

her that instead of warm living creatures of home and family, they had become but spirits, part of the night, and hurrying onward into an ever-deepening night.

As they reached the spot where they were to part, and Mr. Carter rose to step ashore, he folded Patty closely in his arms, "Remember," he whispered in her ear, "you are the oldest now, be your mother's stay and comfort."

"I will, father," she breathed, "I will be everything I can," and to her the promise had the sacredness of a vow.

Daylight was faintly showing when she again reached the home clearing, a fine rain was falling, a mist hung low over the lake, every rush and weed and blade of grass was dripping and sodden. Patty roused Johnny who, tired out, was asleep in the bottom of the canoe, and sent him stumbling on, then having made the boat fast, as she went slowly up the path to the house, what with her own weariness and the dismal daybreak the sense of forlornness she had been holding resolutely back, rolled over her, a black, crushing force. Even home brought no cheer, for with the

sight of it came the realization that the stay they had always known, and that had never failed them, the strong, kindly father was there no more. With that a sudden panic of weakness and helplessness seized her, she trembled at thought of the future. "I cannot bear it," she sobbed, "I cannot." Then she shut her teeth tight. "Patty Carter," she said sharply to herself, "no more of this. You are the oldest now, you have promised to be your mother's stay and comfort, now be it!"

CHAPTER XVII

DARK DAYS IN THE CLEARING

THERE was no question that all the Carter household shared Patty's feelings to a greater or less degree — but not a word of this was spoken. Patty sang about her work and when her mother observed, "Patty, if thy voice were as good as thy will thee would be an excellent singer," she had answered gaily, "Yes, mother, but this is a case where you must take the will for the deed." Johnny whistled, sometimes it is true rather a strangled whistle, as he did the tasks his strength made possible. Mrs. Carter kept her usual peaceful quiet, though Patty could but notice the paleness of her face. And when Robby fretted, as he so often did, "Where's fadder? I wants my fadder," everyone, including Lucy, tried to see who could most quickly divert his mind.

None the less under the outer surface lay an undercurrent of dread and sharp anxiety.

Johnny started at any unaccustomed sound; Lucy refused to sleep unless she could hold Patty's hand; and if Patty awoke from troubled dreams in the night to wonder if any mischance had befallen Alson and the one with him, and if her father was indeed safely away, it was seldom that she did not hear a movement in her mother's bed which told that she was wakeful and worrying also.

For the first week after Mr. Carter left everything moved along so smoothly that Patty forgot her gloomy forebodings of that morning. Then one afternoon Johnny rushed in full of excitement, "I've found a bee tree!" he shouted. "I'm going to cut it down. Get some things ready to put the honey in."

"No, no, John," his mother had urged. "You are not big enough to cut down a bee tree alone. You don't know how."

"Oh, yes, I do. I've seen father. I know how." And before any one could say more he had seized an ax and was off to the woods again.

An hour went by, two hours and still there was no sign of Johnny. "Patty, hadn't thee better go to the woods and see what Johnny

is doing?" And the accent of her mother's tone more than the words sent Patty off with hurrying feet. As she drew near the place where she expected to find him she paused to listen, but there was no ring of an ax, no sound at all, the silence was oppressive. Then she heard a humming in the air above her, and looking up she saw a thin dark line that she knew was the laden bees moving homeward. Keeping these in sight she followed on to where they entered a tall half-hollow maple. A bee tree surely, but no chopper was in sight. She might have made a mistake in the tree, but as she passed around it she saw first a litter of fresh chips on the ground, and then where the trunk had been partly cut through. "John, oh, John!" she called in sudden alarm.

"Here, Patty, this way," answered a faint voice, and turning she caught sight of Johnny on the ground, pinned down by a big limb.

"Oh, Patty, can you get it off?" he asked weakly. "I can't, and I didn't know whether anybody would ever come and find me."

"How did it happen?" she questioned, as she put her strength against the heavy limb.

"It was dead, I knew, but I never thought of its falling, when all at once down it came on me. I fell so I couldn't move, an' my leg's all doubled up under and hurts dreadful."

Patty glanced around for the ax, and using the handle of that for a lever she managed to partly pry and partly lift the limb to one side, then she knelt down by him, "Are you much hurt, dear?"

A spasm of pain crossed his chubby and tear-stained face, "It's my leg. Oh, Patty, I'm afraid it's broke! What shall I do if it is broke?" as he tried to rise.

She put him gently back, "In the first place you will lie still, just where you are, while I run to the house for Brown Ben and the little sled. It may not be as bad as you think."

"It's broke, I'm sure it is," he whimpered, "and I can't go after the cows any more, or pen up the sheep nights, or help milk, or do any of the things I told father I would; and you and mother have so much to do, an' Lucy isn't good for anything."

"Oh, Johnny, don't say that! Lucy isn't strong and well as you and I are. And don't you worry about the work," she paused to say

as she was hastening away, "things will get done somehow."

Mrs. Carter returned to the woods with Patty, and when they had Johnny safely to the house Patty changed the harness on Brown Ben for her saddle and hurried for the doctor. It proved that Johnny had been right, the leg was not only broken but badly broken. "Both bones," was the doctor's verdict. "Have to be in bed six weeks at the least."

When he heard this Johnny gave a gulp, "Remember, son, how much worse it might have been," his mother hastened to console. "You might have been killed, as was Henry Forbes last winter when a limb struck his head. We have great cause to be thankful."

In the days that followed Patty, full as her mind was with her added duties, began to notice an unwonted lassitude in her mother's look and manner. "Mother, you are not well?" she questioned.

"A little tired," was the answer, "but it will soon pass off."

It did not pass off, however, and there came a day when a sudden chill seized her, and Patty hurried her to bed, well wrapped in

blankets, with hot flatirons at her feet, and a cold terror at her own heart. This latter was not lessened when the doctor pronounced it a well developed case of fever. Patty followed him out as he left. "Is she in danger?" she asked appealingly.

He hemmed with a professional air, "I can hardly tell yet. A serious case but she may come through. We will trust so."

Patty's eyes were misty as she turned her face away; sickness with her mother was most rare and now was of itself bad enough, but the thought of losing her had never come to Patty before, and she gasped as though a hand had gripped her throat. She was just going back into the house when she heard a faint sob from the direction of the wood-pile, and there on a log sat Lucy, her apron over her face. "Oh, Lucy, don't," she begged.

With that Lucy dropped her apron, "I can't help it, Patty. Father and Alson have gone away, and we'll never see them again; if Johnny gets well he'll be a cripple; mother's going to die; and we'll be left here all alone, and what will become of us?"

All these fears were lurking in Patty's own

heart, and for the moment she felt like sitting down beside Lucy and putting her apron over her face, too. But this was an hour when weakness would never do; all the strength she possessed of soul or body she must summon to her aid.

“Oh, Lucy, don’t be always looking on the dark side of things!” It was only by an effort that she kept her voice steady. “Of course we shall see father and Alson again; as for John, the doctor says he is doing well and the bones are knitting finely; he says too, that there has been a good deal of fever around, and if other people get well from fevers, why shouldn’t mother? I can tell you this, though, if she sees you fretting and crying around it will only make her the worse. Oh, Lucy,” her tone changing to entreaty, “we must be brave! Try to be brave, do!”

Lucy wiped away her tears and stood up, “I’ll try, Patty, I will.”

As Patty entered the house her mother called to her, “Child,” pressing Patty’s hand in her hot one, “I don’t know what thee will ever do.”

“Now don’t you worry one bit, mother,”

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and with a light touch she smoothed her hair, "we shall get along all right." Patty's tone of cheerful assurance quieted Mrs. Carter, and she lay back more restfully on her pillow. "His ways are dark," she murmured as if to herself, then, though her lips quivered she added, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."

Johnny, too, needed comforting, but of a different kind. "Darn that old bee tree," he exclaimed giving his pillow a thump, "I wish I'd never seen it! Here I was going to do so much, and now, with father gone, and mother sick I'm worse than nobody."

"Oh, no, John," her voice was soothing, "you can be a help just as you are."

"Great help!" he scoffed, "I'd like to know what I can do?"

"You can amuse Robby, tell him stories, make him pictures, keep him quiet, that will be a great help. Then you can remember the things that need to be done and tell me if I forget."

His face brightened, "I was just thinking that you'd better keep the cows in the fenced lot now, even if they don't give so much milk;

they stray 'way off and make trouble. And the hens, I'm sure I heard a fox bark last evening, you want to shut them up every night."

"There," said Patty, "you see you can help if you are on your back."

"I'll try to, anyway. And send Rob in, I'll see what I can do for him."

What Patty had urged upon Lucy she repeated often to herself in the hard days that followed, "I must, I *must* be brave!" for as she well knew the little household was now dependent on her. Lucy, true to her promise, did her best, but Lucy was timid by nature and small of her age, and Patty felt towards her now, as always, that she was the little sister to be shielded from every possible hardship. Then besides looking after Johnny and the constant sick anxiety for her mother, minor troubles multiplied: Brown Ben lamed himself in some unknown manner, the cows kept breaking out and wandering away. And one night Johnny's call woke her from a brief sleep, "Patty, Patty, there's something catching the hens!" and she ran out to find four of their flock of ten dead on the ground.

"I told you to shut 'em up every night," Johnny's tone was sharp with reproof as she came back to him.

"I know you did," she answered humbly, "and I forgot. But, oh, Johnny, mother is so sick," and dropping beside the bed she hid her face in his pillow.

Johnny looked at her a moment with almost incredulous wonder, then he reached out and touched her rumpled hair, "Poor Patty!" he whispered in a half-frightened way. For to his boy's mind it seemed that matters must be serious indeed, when Patty flinched.

CHAPTER XVIII

FOES AND FRIENDS

THEN one day Patty discovered that the corn meal was gone and of the wheat flour but a small quantity remained. Brown Ben was still too lame to use, there remained only the oxen, and she had never driven oxen. But at least she could make the attempt, something had to be done, the stores had to be replenished, and she had to do it. With Lucy's help she loaded a bag of wheat and one of corn on a light sled, put the yoke on the oxen, fastened them to the sled, and taking the long ox-whip set out for Fuller's, the nearest mill, sometimes riding, and sometimes walking beside her slow-moving team. Perhaps the oxen understood the need for them to be on their best behavior, for they ambled along in a leisurely docile manner, responding to a touch of the guiding whip.

As she came near the mill there was an

ominous quiet, while the miller stood leaning idly against a side of the doorway. "Isn't the mill running to-day?" she asked anxiously.

He looked her coolly over before he took his pipe from his mouth to answer, "No, the water's not 'igh enough."

"When do you think you will grind again?"

"Carn't say," with the indifference of unconcern, "not till it rains."

She thought a moment, "Have you any flour I could change the wheat for?"

He shook his head without troubling to speak.

She sighed, "I'm sorry, but perhaps then, the best I can do will be to leave the grist and come again for it."

"Whose gel be you?" he questioned shortly.

"I am Patty Carter."

"I thought so. Well, I don't know as I care to do hany more grinding for the Carters. Your brother and father 'ave both sneaked off like the cowards they are, when their 'elp was needed."

Patty's eyes blazed as she retorted, "My father and brother are not cowards. And you need never grind for us again if you don't want to." With her head held very erect she walked away, but by the time she had reached the oxen she hesitated irresolute, then slowly she turned back, "Mr. Fuller, I would go hungry myself before I would ask a favor of you, after what you have said, but my mother is sick, my little brother has broken his leg, they and the other children need the flour and meal, for their sakes will you not grind it?"

He looked at her sourly, "You're 'igh an' mighty enough for all of 'em. But I can't risk losin' my custom by grindin' for such as you."

Without a word she turned away. The hurt of his words went deeper than the sting of indignation because she realized their truth. On every side they were avoided, as though theirs was a plague spot: in this time of trouble not a soul came near them, perhaps not a soul knew of it: in her need she knew not where to turn for a friend. After this repulse she would be afraid to make the trial. It was an experience so new and strange that

it was the more appalling. Ermina and Margaretta had returned with Oliver to Montreal for a visit, and Charles had gone to bring them home, even Uncle Theobald was away with the "Major Widow." Beyond these she could not feel sure; even of these dared she? She was indeed alone, and lifting her eyes to the trees, where autumn red and gold was glowing against the deep green of the pines, she lifted her heart to the blue sky above, and from its depths went up a pitiful little petition, "Dear Lord, only give me strength. I've no one but you to depend on."

The first thing Patty did when she reached home was to sift over some bran and stir up a loaf of the finest. Then she called Lucy to one side and said, "You and I will have to eat bran bread for the present, I couldn't get anything to-day and the little flour there is left we must save for the others."

The next time the doctor came, he ordered broth for Mrs. Carter, and a strengthening diet for John. Where they were to come from he did not question, and though the command left Patty with a distressed wonder she made no comment. That the doctor shared

the general prejudice against them she was already aware. His tone and manner were wholly of the professional and not the friendly; he with the rest, as she reflected bitterly, counted them as disgraced as though set apart by actual crime.

But the broth — the broth — Patty kept studying that over. She did not dare sacrifice any of the few remaining hens, for eggs were also ordered. For the first time she began to lose her courage, to feel that an avalanche of misfortune had started that would not stop till they were whelmed and crushed beneath it.

An excited cry from Johnny roused her from her gloomy thoughts, "Oh, Patty, see, there's a wild turkey on the fence by the barn. My, wouldn't I bring him down if I could get out!"

Before he had finished Patty had run and caught down the rifle. "Is it loaded?" she asked.

"Yes, with every grain of powder there is in the house."

"I thought father left enough for two charges."

“Yes, but I killed a squirrel with one.”

Cautiously Patty stole out of the house. Alson had taught her to shoot but her practice was limited, and now there was only one charge of powder, and so much depending on it! “If we can keep up your mother’s strength,” the doctor had said, “she will get well.” The turkey had not seen Patty and stood at ease on the fence, a splendid mark. Carefully and coolly she found a rest for her gun, and ran her eye along its barrel to get the range. Then a sudden panic seized her, she felt her hands trembling. The big bird was slowly lifting his wings and in another moment it might be too late.

There was a loud report, the turkey fluttered to the ground and lay motionless, and Patty, hardly daring to believe her eyes, ran forward, grasped it by the legs and bore it in triumph to the house.

“Well done!” and Johnny lifted himself on his elbow to look the big fellow over. “My, but won’t he taste good; and that was a fine shot, right through the heart! You must have taken good aim.”

“John,” Patty whispered, “don’t tell any

one, but I didn't take any aim at all. I just pointed the gun and shut my eyes. It was Providence not I that killed the turkey."

To her mother she made another confession, "Mother, you have often said that God will feed people to-day, just as he did so long ago, and I never quite believed it; but now I know it is so."

And Mrs. Carter smiled weakly as she answered, "Patty, dear, to learn even one of God's great truths is worth much suffering."

Then one morning, when the last of the turkey was eaten, a shadow darkened the doorway and Grey Wolf stepped in. "Where white brother?" he asked, looking around.

Patty made a wide gesture with her hand, "Gone, long way; for long time."

"Um, um," was his stolid response, and how much or little he knew she had no idea.

He glanced at Mrs. Carter and walked to the door of the other room. "White squaw sick, little brother sick, too?"

"No, he broke his leg."

"Um, um, who kill meat?"

"Patty killed a wild turkey the other day," answered Johnny.

"Yes," interposed Patty, "and it was the last powder we had. Could you let me have a little till we can get some?"

Grey Wolf lifted his powder horn from his neck and emptied it on a corner of the table, then he grunted again and pointed to Patty's small hands with the comment, "No fit gun," and without another word walked away.

But the next afternoon he stood in the door again, and this time there was a quarter of venison over his shoulder. "Papoose like meat, mebbey," and he motioned to Robby, who with a gurgling laugh ran toward him.

"Oh, Grey Wolf," Patty held out both hands, "how can I thank you? Not only Robby but mother and John need meat."

The dark face softened, "White sisters kind to squaw, sick papoose. Grey Wolf not forget." And looking after him as he stalked away Patty felt a sudden glow at her heart, they were not wholly friendless after all.

From that day there was no more lack of material for broths. If Grey Wolf passed the word around that their "hearthstone was growing cold," which is the Indian way of saying that there is a lack of provision to cook

at it, Patty never knew; but a few days later Peter Muskrat came in with a fine bunch of ducks, and not seldom of a morning she would find a squirrel, a little heap of partridges, or a string of fish on the door sill. "I've sometimes thought, mother," she said, "that it was a real nuisance, the Indians coming around so much, but I'm just ashamed of myself now with all they are doing for us. I was in despair when Grey Wolf came that time."

"Thee knows the old saying, dear," answered Mrs. Carter, "'If thee wants to have friends, thee must show thyself friendly,' and surely all we have ever done for our Indian friends is being returned now." Patty bit her lip; she was thinking of the others whose friendship had not stood the test, but she forbore to speak.

Then best of all, one morning Margaretta came flying up the path from the lake. "You blessed Patty!" she cried giving her a hug. "And here I have been away enjoying myself and you having such a dreadful time."

"How did you know I had?"

"Mr. Rayson brought us from Belfield yesterday, and when I asked him about you he

said he'd 'hearn tell as how you'd been sick here.' Then I saw Doctor Brown going past and I hailed him and learned the rest." She did not tell the opinion Rayson had expressed, that "if the Carters was havin' a hard time it only served 'em right!"

"So," concluded Margaretta, "I hurried over as soon as I could this morning, and Ermina sent this cordial, it's something the nuns in Montreal make, and she is coming to-morrow."

The fever had left Mrs. Carter, and though she lay wan and weak among the pillows her eyes still held their soft light as she looked up at Margaretta, "The sight of thee is itself a cordial, dear."

"Then it is one you may expect to take very often." As she was leaving she turned to Patty, "Come, walk down to the canoe with me," and as soon as they were away from the house she caught Patty's hand with the question, "Now tell me, what can we do for you? I owe so much to you that you must not hesitate to let me help you."

"If you can only let me have a little wheat flour," was the quick answer, "I've been

pounding corn in the mortar for the rest of us, but mother's stomach is too weak yet for anything so coarse."

Margaretta looked at her in surprise, "But wasn't there any one to take some wheat for you to Fuller's mill?"

"He wouldn't grind for us; I went myself," and briefly she repeated her experience.

Margaretta's eyes darkened as she listened. "The idea! In a time of sickness — afraid to lose custom! Indeed he'll find that he will lose custom by this."

"No, no," urged Patty, "let it pass; Brown Ben is getting over his lameness and I have helped John make some crutches, and now that he is beginning to get around on them he will soon be able to go to the mill at Belfield, that is if they don't refuse to work for us."

"Never mind, we will see to that."

Patty looked at her keenly. "Then you think they won't? Oh, Margaretta, that is the hardest of all, to know that every one — even of those who were our friends — is against us, and in the time of greatest need."

"That is because of the war. It is always

so in time of war, and I have heard that during the Revolution the people in America who held to England suffered in the same way."

"Yes," Patty's tone was thoughtful, "I suppose they did. One thing, I will never condemn people who do not think as I do."

Margaretta patted her hand. "What a hard time you must have had!"

"In some ways, yes. But now that Johnny is up again, and mother is going to get well, I don't mind." She paused suddenly and with a sob dropped her face on Margaretta's shoulder.

"Why, Patty, what is it?" she asked, startled and alarmed.

Patty lifted her head. "I didn't cry when things were at their worst, but now that you are here again and that dreadful strain is over I can't help it."

Margaretta looked at her steadily a moment. "Patty," she said abruptly, "you have changed."

"It may be I have grown a little thinner with all that I have been through."

"I don't mean that. I can't tell exactly what I do mean, only there is a look in your

eyes and a something in your voice that wasn't there before; as if you saw more and felt deeper."

"Yes, perhaps I have changed," Patty spoke slowly, "though I hadn't thought of it before. Mother says there are some truths we can learn only through suffering, and I think I have been learning some of them. It hasn't been an easy lesson, but now I don't wish it unlearned."

As Margaretta unfastened her birch-bark canoe Patty glanced across the lake. "What a fine view of the lake you have now the swamp is gone!"

"Yes, I enjoy it greatly."

As she spoke, Patty's thought had gone to the day of the burning, and the part Alson had played. It may well be that Margaretta's thoughts had done the same, for as she lifted her paddle for their first dip she asked in a hesitating way: "I suppose you have heard nothing from Alson?"

"Nothing from anyone that's gone; it's all a blank silence. Of course we couldn't expect it to be any other way, but sometimes I get to thinking of — of them, and it seems

as if I couldn't endure it not to hear, to know, something."

Margaretta did not answer, but as she pushed away there was a wistful look in her face which made Patty quite certain that she, too, shared the feeling.

CHAPTER XIX

THE STORY MARGARETTA TOLD

"I WONDER if you would like to hear a story?" Margaretta crossed her hands in her lap and looked from one to another of the faces gathered around the Carter hearth.

"I would," answered Johnny as quickly as he could speak; "that is if it has a lot about bears an' fighting."

"Or bee trees," added Patty teasingly.

"Patty," Mrs. Carter's voice from the big rocking chair where she was now sitting was of gentle reproof, "John and mother have talked that over, and while he will listen to mother next time, he has borne the consequence of his mistake very bravely."

"You are right, mother; I take it all back."

"There isn't anything about bears in this story," said Margaretta, "but there's plenty of fighting."

"That's good," and Johnny drew his chair

closer to her; "I haven't heard a story since father went away; he knew a lot of splendid ones."

It was a gray day, the sky and lake and trees were all veiled in a soft mist, and the autumn coolness of the afternoon made the fire of light wood on the hearth grateful, and each one settled into a listening attitude.

"This story," Margareta explained, "is one I heard in Montreal from a nun in the convent where Madelaine de la Verchères was once a pupil, and it is of the days when Champlain and Frontenac, with their followers, were laying the foundations of what they hoped would be indeed a great New France. But now, as the result of time and events, it is not French, but English; no more New France, but Canada. From their first coming the Algonquins and Hurons, among the Indians, were the friends of the French, but the Iroquois were always their foes, and waged a fight to the death, cruel and pitiless against them.

"A frequent center of trouble with them was the seigniory of Verchères, some twenty miles east of Montreal, on the south shore of

the St. Lawrence, a wide area of forest with a small clearing along the river bank. Here lived the Seigneur de la Verchères, with his family and retainers, much as men had lived in the old feudal days in England. Here, because of its exposed situation, lying directly in the path of the Iroquois in their numerous attacks on the scattered settlements along the river, he had built for protection a fort and block-house, the two connected by a covered passage, which from its exposed position as well as the repeated attacks upon it was known as Castle Dangerous.

“ It was near this time of the year, an October morning in 1692, the Seigneur de la Verchères was in Quebec on military duty; his wife was also away, leaving in charge at home the daughter, Madelaine, only fourteen years, and two younger boys of ten and twelve. Everything was going on as usual: the men were out at work in the fields, Madelaine was at the bank of the river watching for the batteau of a girl friend, who, with her husband, was expected to make her a visit, when all at once there rang out the dreadful war-whoop of the Iroquois. Although it was not

the first time they had heard the sound, it was none the less terrifying, as the Indians in paint and feathers sprang out of the woods in an attempt to make Madelaine a prisoner; but she was too swift for them, and gained the open gate of the fort, the men who had been at work outside following, and the Indians close behind.

“Once inside the fort there was a panic of fear, some even wanted to surrender, urging their powerlessness against such an overwhelming force. For the Iroquois numbered nearly a hundred, and the total strength of the defenders included only Madelaine, her little brothers, two soldiers, an old man of eighty, and a few helpers on the farm. And among these the only brave and self-composed one was this young daughter of the lord of the manor. But the most of Madelaine’s life had been spent in an atmosphere of danger; she had not only seen more than one assault repulsed, but only two years before, her mother, with only three or four men had bravely defended Castle Dangerous against a marauding band of Iroquois until help came from Montreal. Now the time had come to

prove her spirit, and, as the old chronicle reads, 'God gave courage to a maid to act the man.'

"At once Madelaine took command and the rest obeyed. She made the best of her limited force; sentinels were appointed, watches arranged, everything made ready for a siege which all knew meant a struggle to the bitter end, to life or death. The example of her bravery at once infused courage into the hearts of her tiny garrison, and inspired old and young alike. The one small cannon the fort possessed was brought into use, and whenever it was fired the Indians fearing and dreading such a terrible death-dealing weapon would retreat into the forest, only to dash out and renew the attack. In one of these free moments the visitors she had been expecting arrived and were hurried into the fort, where we might think they would have proved an added help, but instead they both, and the young husband especially, were frightened helpless and took refuge in the safest part of the fort. On the other hand, Madelaine's little brothers each shouldered a gun and fired from the loop-holes whenever a painted face

appeared. And not a moment of rest or security they had, whether it be in the long, dark hours of the night, when the foe was most to be dreaded, or in the more welcome daylight.

“Nor was it for one day and night alone. Day after day and night after night the Iroquois kept up the siege, and again and again attacked Castle Dangerous, with all the wily and savage skill for which they were noted. Not a few of the besiegers fell wounded and dead in the clearing and were carried away by their dusky comrades; while on the other side those within the fort were worn almost helpless by the long and exhausting strain on strength and nerve, as the siege dragged along to the fourth, fifth and sixth days without any sign of relief. In all this time Madelaine was the sustaining force. Never once did her courage flag or her hope fail. Wherever there was danger or hardship, there she was. She stood sentinel, she took her turn at the portholes, she was everywhere cheering, helping, encouraging.

“At last the seventh day of the siege dawned, and as haggard, weary and well-nigh

despairing they looked out over the river their strained eyes saw what they had so waited and watched for. Borne on the strong current, boats were in sight, boats filled with armed men, help was at hand. For word had reached Frontenac, governor of Montreal, of the perilous condition of the tiny garrison twenty miles away, and no time was lost in sending forty men to the rescue. As the soldiers of Frontenac marched into the beleaguered fort and relieved its exhausted inmates, the defeated Iroquois slunk away into the forest as stealthily as they had come, and Castle Dangerous was saved.

“A report of the heroism of Madelaine, the story of how against overwhelming odds a girl’s brave heart had held defeat at bay, was sent to the governor at Montreal, and the proud father at Quebec, who, as our fathers would have done, at once obtained leave of absence and hastened home. And in the history of New France, made up as it is of the brave deeds of the brave, is enrolled and still lives the name of Madelaine de la Verchères, ‘The Heroine of Castle Dangerous.’”

Johnny drew a long breath, “That’s a

splendid story! I wish I could have been there."

Lucy shivered, "I don't wish so."

"I'm not so sure that I do either," said Margareta. "Think of that strain, seven long days: those war-whoops ringing in your ears. Never sure any minute when an assault would have to be beaten back! I'm afraid my courage could never have endured it. But, do you know, when I heard this story it made me think of a girl I do know. Can you guess who she is?"

"I know," cried Johnny, "It's our Patty. You just ought to have seen her eyes whenever the soldiers came, and — and she's done some things that were awful plucky."

"It did make me angry," Patty admitted, "when the soldiers were insolent and overbearing, so angry that my blood would fairly boil; but it's easy to be angry, or to have your heart thrill at a story of courage; or even to do something when one's wrought up by excitement. But to stand steady and endure for day after day, that's a different matter."

Mrs. Carter laid down the light knitting in her hands, "Stories of courage and daring

are always fascinating, and it is well, for all our lives we need strong, brave hearts. Yet, after all, this young girl but proved true to the duty which came to her; and while I trust thee will never be put to such a test, still thee may be equally true to the duty that comes to thy hand, and though it may not win a place in history, none the less thee will each be heroes and heroines."

"You know," said Patty, "that mother is the daughter of a Quaker preacher, and she has to preach a little sometimes."

Margaretta smiled softly as she drew her cloak over her shoulders, "That was a good little sermon, and when duty wears a very humdrum face or comes in an unpleasant shape I'll remember it."

CHAPTER XX

LEAVING THE CLEARING

WHEN Patty told Margaretta of their intended going, to her amazement the latter showed no surprise. "I knew when your father went that, of course, you would all go as soon as you could. When is it to be?"

"Not till there's sleighing."

"Oh, then that evil day is still distant. And so you want to sell the farm?"

"If we only could."

"How fortunate! A man we knew in England was at our house not long ago, he has just fallen heir to a small legacy, and wants to buy a farm. I will have Charles write to him right away, and I shouldn't wonder if he would take the place, for he liked the lake so much. O dear," she sighed, "how everything has changed! When we came I never thought but we would be here as neighbors a

long, long time if not always, and now we are not even to be in the same country."

Patty recalled Alson's words, so nearly the same, and there was a spice of mischief in her tone as she said, "Unless you become an American," and though Margaretta blushed she did not answer. "I know," Patty went on, "I never once dreamed I should ever live anywhere but in Canada, and I surely never thought that our family would be scattered as it is. Things do turn sadly and strangely."

"Do you want to go?"

Patty thought a moment, "Sometimes yes, and sometimes no. When I think of father and Alson and what it will be to see them again, why, I can hardly wait. And again when I look out on the lake and think how I have loved it, and the many happy days I have spent here it's hard, hard to think of leaving. I'm almost glad the neighbors have turned against us; if they were all like you I'm sure it would break my heart."

But as time went on and every plan and purpose centered more and more around the intended journey, Patty began to share with the rest the wish for the day to come. For

never had the Carter family looked forward more eagerly and impatiently for the return of spring than they now did for the first snowflakes to fall, the snowflakes that were to form the road for their going. "Winter may set in early, we must be ready for the first sleighing," Mrs. Carter had said. But week after week went by and never a hint of snow to aid their journey.

"I guess winter never means to come this year," Lucy had complained, and Johnny — no longer on crutches, turned sadly from the window through which he had been gazing, "It will never snow again."

Patty could hardly wonder at his opinion, for outside the sun shone as brightly as on a spring day, the lake, unfrozen, lay like a silver mirror, framed by the dark green of the pines beyond. "I'm sure," Lucy's voice grew more and more plaintive, "that the snow doesn't come as early this year as it always has before just to disappoint us."

Patty herself, wearying for the snow, and what it would make possible, was tempted to share this doleful mood, but she pressed it back and answered by way of comfort, "Never

mind, Lucy, we mustn't be selfish, think how many are enjoying this fine weather: and I believe it will certainly snow to-morrow."

But to-morrow, and other to-morrows came, and still the sun shone, the air was mild, and the lake open. All the preparations possible had already been made; in the friend of the Morants a buyer had fortunately been found for the farm and stock — much to the disgust of Rayson — the sleigh that they were to use had been put in order and stood waiting its load; Brown Ben had been securely shod and almost seemed to share the general sense of expectancy. At last one evening as they sat around the fire all at once there came a sharp tapping against the window. Mrs. Carter bent her head to listen, "That sounds like snow."

Lucy ran and drew aside the curtain, "It is the snow," she cried.

Snow it was indeed, and no gentle fall at that, but a driving storm that came thick and fast, hurried on by the stormy gusts which swept up from the lake, and through the tall pines with a sound like an angry pack roaring for its prey. The heavy rafters of the

stout log cabin shook under it, and the snow sifting through every crack and crevice soon stretched in little drifts across the floor.

"What a dreadful night! Oh, aren't you afraid the roof will blow off or the chimney take fire?" quavered Lucy.

"Never mind the night," and as he spoke Johnny threw a fresh log on the blazing fire. "It will make sleighing, won't it, mother?"

"I hope so."

"Then to-morrow we can do wide in the sleigh and find fadder?" said Robby.

And, "I hope so," she answered again.

The next morning they found that winter had indeed set in. All around, the ground, the lake, the pines were snow-covered and snow-laden, the sun shone, the sky was blue and cloudless, but so piercing was the cold that the blankets over them were stiff with their frozen breath, and for all the fire the great logs had kept in the fire-place through the night, every article they were to eat had to be thawed before breakfast could be prepared. Lucy blew on her numbed fingers, saying, "I wonder if it will be as cold as this when we get to 'the Ohio'?"

"Never mind the cold," and as Johnny spoke he clattered down an armful of wood on the hearth, "sleighting has come, and we have wanted it long enough."

"And Canada has been pretty chilly to us anyway lately, so a little more doesn't really matter," Patty could not refrain from adding.

Matters were now hurried forward. In those last days Patty had scant time for thinking; Mrs. Carter had not yet recovered strength from her sickness and on Patty fell the burden of making ready. "It's all right, little mother," she made answer to any protest. "What's a great girl, nearly seventeen, for if not to do things? You have always carried the heaviest part for us all, it's my turn now. You know you will need all your strength for the journey, and what will father say if he finds you looking like a ghost?"

Then, almost before they realized it was upon them, came the last morning. The green-painted box-sled stood at the door, loaded. "I must take the little wheel," Mrs. Carter had said, "it doesn't seem that I could ever spin on any other."

"Of course we must take it," Patty had

agreed, "it has played too important a part in this family to be left behind."

So the little wheel went in, the big red chest packed with bedding, the blue chest filled with clothes, the little round table on which the candle sat of evenings, the clock, and the few articles endeared by association or essential for use, that they were able to take on their uncertain journey.

The younger members of the family, even the usually trouble-fearing Lucy, were jumping about laughing with gladness in the excitement of setting out. But Patty looked sadly around the rooms that had always been so snug and cozy, and that now dismantled and bare seemed cold and desolate indeed: the floors snow trodden and littered, the uncurtained windows half blocked up with snow, the fire burning to ashes on the hearth. The home that would be home never again, but knit the closer to her for all she had there endured as well as enjoyed. For, though Patty as yet but dimly realized the fact, it was here that she had consciously entered life's great school, where she had learned lessons of high resolve and forceful endeavor; to meet trial,

and conquer obstacle, and overcome self; and where from an unthinking, impulsive girl she had entered upon the wider way which leads up to earnest womanhood.

Charles Morant with Ermina and Margaretta had come across the lake on their snowshoes, the latter bringing as a farewell offering a bag of little cakes for Robby—stamping about proudly in his first pair of real shoes, and Ermina another bottle of cordial for Mrs. Carter, “It will help you to guard against the cold,” she had urged. From a near-by camp a group of Indians stood silently against the wall, for old Peter Muskrat had learned the day before of their departure and spreading the word, they had come with their little gifts, a string of wampum, a bit of smoked venison, a handful of dried pumpkin, but all alike expressive of good will.

There were few words said. The most they had to say had been spoken before, and they did not seem to dare to trust their voices, not even when John came bustling in to say that everything was ready to start. With that they all passed out; Mrs. Carter, still pale and frail, well wrapped in her drab cloak and quilted

hood of the same shade, was snugly tucked in among the feather beds, with Robby and Lucy beside her, while Johnny, a ludicrous little figure with Alson's squirrel-skin cap and buffalo coat over his other garments, and Patty glowing in her red cloak and hood, were to sit in a couple of rush-bottomed chairs, close-crowded to the front, and drive.

As they went out to the sleigh the Indians silently stepped forward, shook hands, and the squaws kissed Mrs. Carter and the children. "You have been our true friends," Mrs. Carter's voice faltered, broke, "I shall never forget you."

Patty and Margaretta held each other close and tight, but neither spoke. "You are sure you are well wrapped up?" Ermina asked, "You know the danger of Canadian cold: and be careful that you don't get frostbitten." And when all were seated Charles tucked the protecting blankets and fur robes carefully about them.

Charles was holding Rover by a cord, while Margaretta had Patty's cat in her arms, his black tail waving his disapproval of it all. "You'll take good care of Rover?" Johnny

called over his shoulder as Brown Ben started and the sled creaked forward.

"Never you fear," was the reassuring answer. And Patty felt that the last words they heard were words of good omen. When they reached the edge of the clearing where they passed into the forest-bordered road Patty turned for her last look. A thin spiral of smoke still curled from the chimney, the sun shone on the windows, the house held an atmosphere comfortable and homey. Behind it lay the pine-girt lake, and at the side by brown stalks through the snow she could even trace her little garden. The Indians were slowly filing off, but Margaretta's dark red pelisse made a bright spot of color in the doorway. Patty waved her hand, then a rush of tears blinded her eyes, and before she had brushed them away they had passed on into the road, and the clearing was no longer in sight.

CHAPTER XXI

ON THE JOURNEY

PATTY was aware that hers was the heaviest heart in their little company: her mother was glad to be on her way to the spot where she hoped to find her husband, and the younger children were full of excitement at the change and all that was to come. For their life had been such a secluded one that Robby had never even seen a village, and the first one they passed through he eagerly asked, "Did the houses tum to see one another?" And as the others laughed he looked wondering round, "How did they alls happen to meet here?"

The question of the best route to take had been quite a study with Mrs. Carter. For herself, she would rather have taken the least-traveled and most-secluded roads, thus avoiding notice as far as possible. But as she knew these roads often branched into mere logging-trails, and in their ignorance of the way they

would be in constant danger of being lost and wandering she knew not where. Besides, while the most-traveled roads were the easiest to keep they were none too good, the snow had not yet been packed over the rough corduroy or the frozen hubs been worn smooth; what then would be the condition of the others? She remembered, too, her husband's words, that once they had started the sooner they were across the border the better, and she knew herself that if the fact that they were leaving Canada for America were known they ran a chance of being detained or arrested. But in any case there was risk, and she could only do what seemed to promise the least delay, and hope for the best in an undertaking that left her no choice with respect to entering upon it.

Along the main roads, too, would be situated the most frequent public places of entertainment, and while she was aware that hospitality was counted a sacred duty, and few were the doors that would not cheerfully open to her request, at the same time she also knew that most of those small log cabins had seldom room, without inconvenience, for more than the family, and that there would be less of

questioning at a tavern where strangers were habitually entertained than at a private house.

For the first few miles the road was familiar, then it passed into the unknown. Anxious as they were for haste, their load and the condition of the roads made their progress but slow, and at that it was too often a succession of jars and jolts which Lucy complained made her seasick, and Johnny declared had loosened his teeth.

The first night they stopped at a tavern where the landlord was away, and the landlady perhaps because she was busy or from a fear that they might complain of the miserable fare she gave them, left them alone without question. The second afternoon as they came into the village where they had planned to spend the night Patty looked around with almost a gasp of surprise. Under the shed of the village tavern and along both sides of the street were rows of sleighs, the horses looking like a menagerie of nondescript animals from the variety of skins and quilts and blankets thrown over them to protect them from the cold.

The street too, was full of men, some in buffalo coats and fur caps of all shapes and sizes, with the tails hanging down the back, and not a few gay in blanket coats of varied colors, tied around the waist with a red sash; while at one side a group of squaws in blankets and blue cloth petticoats, and embroidered leggings, squatted gravely on the ground looking on. "What can they be here for?" Johnny asked, but Patty could not tell him, and Mrs. Carter though silent looked disturbed.

At "The Royal George," the only public house in the village, where they stopped, as they went through the hall they could see that the bar-room, with its great blazing fire on which a cart-load of wood glowed, was also full of men stamping in and out, while the attendant in a white apron behind the bar was kept busy filling the glasses ranged along it. "What can it all mean?" Patty had questioned. But she had to wait for an answer till Johnny came in from looking after the horse.

"My!" his accent of mingled excitement and regret, "I wish we'd been a little earlier. There's been a public meeting, and speeches

from that little porch before the window: an' I never went to a public meeting or heard a speech. There's a lot of drinking in there too," lowering his voice and with a jerk of his thumb towards the bar-room, "I stopped in to warm, and some of those old fellows are pretty fierce. They are giving it to the Yankees, too. You just ought to hear them; it's a good thing they don't know who we are."

Mrs. Carter's face was troubled, "I wish we might have come at another time; but be cautious, son, "stay with us and say nothing."

As she spoke the door into the hall opened and a boy came in with the ostensible errand of looking after the fire, but through the crack left ajar Patty caught a momentary glimpse of a face peering in. She gave a smothered exclamation, a quick start, but the face had vanished. Patty opened her lips to speak, then she looked at her mother so pale and tired, and was silent, though a little line of troubled thought showed on her forehead.

In a few moments the door opened again, this time for the landlord, a burly, red-faced man, to enter, "Did I understand that you wanted to stay all night?" he asked gruffly.

"That was our wish."

"Where are you goin'?" jerking out the words.

"We are moving," Mrs. Carter answered with quiet dignity.

"I see that by your load, but where to?"

"We have not yet decided on a location."

"H'm, very likely. Where is your husband?"

"He has gone on in advance."

"Well," the growl of his voice deepening, "my house is already pretty full, I don't know as I can keep you."

A flush of indignation reddened Patty's cheek — she glanced out at the growing dusk and then at her mother's white face. "Oh, do not say that!" and she stepped forward. "My mother has been sick, she is not able to go farther. Please let us stay." The plea was a hard one for Patty to make, for herself she had rather face the bitterest outside than such unfriendliness: but it was not of herself but the others that she must think.

"No, daughter," Mrs. Carter had risen, "if our presence is unwelcome we will go on, trusting that some other door will open."

The landlord hesitated, evidently shamed by her manner, though when he spoke his tone was still ungracious. "You can stay, but if you do you'll have to put up with what you can get."

A look of relief crossed Mrs. Carter's face, "Oh, we will accept anything, only so we are together!"

When at last they were shown to their room they all looked around in surprise for it was both large and comfortable, a bright fire adding to its cheer. "I guess that landlord's like a singed cat, better'n he looks," suggested Johnny.

"I think he was ashamed to be so mean to mother," said Patty.

"I don't believe his old house is full, anyway," added Johnny as he drew off Robby's shoes, "most of the folks who were here have gone away, and there are less than half a dozen left in the bar-room now."

The next morning as they were making ready to start, Johnny, who had gone out to the barn, dashed in, his face very red and his breath coming quick and hard. "What do you think?" as soon as he could speak, "Some-

body has cut one of the sleigh runners right in two."

"It is Rayson's work!" cried Patty, "I was almost sure I saw him here last night. Father said he would work us an injury if he could, and he has told our story and set every one against us."

Mrs. Carter sighed, "And I understand that men were here for miles around. I had hoped that once among strangers we would no longer be annoyed."

"But what shall we do?" asked Johnny, "We can't go on so."

"It must be mended at once. No, Patty, stay with Lucy and Robby, I will attend to this," and she walked out her lips pressed together.

The sled runners were simply of stout oak, and the village blacksmith by bolting on an iron plate was soon able to repair the damage. But there was the added delay of unloading and reloading, and by the time they were finally ready the morning was well gone.

"Had we better try to go on to-day in this bitter cold?" asked Patty.

"Yes," Mrs. Carter's tone had all its old

time firmness, "we will get away from this unfriendly place as fast as we can, before they inflict any more injury."

As Patty had said, it was bitterly cold. Lucy and Robby were glad to huddle in the bottom of the sleigh, Brown Ben's coat was white with frost, and their very eyelashes seemed frozen, "I would have waited," said Mrs. Carter, "but last night's work makes me feel that the sooner we are across the border-line the better."

"Yes," agreed Patty, "now we have started, let us go on as long as we can." For to her had come the thought that Rayson might also have told that her mother carried with her the money for the farm, and who knew how much of a temptation this of itself might be?

Presently looking ahead she saw a man with a gun over his shoulder come out of the woods and stand by the side of the road as if waiting for them. To stop or turn round would be to show fear and perhaps invite the worst, and cautiously feeling with her foot that their own rifle was close at hand she drove on. As they drew nearer she saw that it was an Indian, "I hope it may not be an unfriendly one," was

her thought. A moment more and she gave a little cry, "It's Snow Storm! Why Snow Storm, who thought of seeing you! Where did you come from?"

"Camp," with a wave of his hand to indicate its direction, "Squaw hear story last night, tell Anoonk — Anoonk say, 'Our friends, go help.'"

"That was kind of you, and how is Bright Star?"

He smiled, "Little papoose — boy — some day be chief."

"That's good news. But I thought you were away with the army?"

"White men no fight now — come home." He gave his shoulders an expressive shrug. "English heap lie — say whip Yankee — now Yankee whip English. Big battle," and he made a motion towards the northwest, "Tecumseh killed. Indians killed — English killed. Soldiers scared — run through woods days, days," and he held up both hands with fingers spread as showing the number. "I say wash off war paint — make friends Yankees."

They knew that the battle referred to was

that of the Thames, in the Northwest, at which the Americans had won back more than all that they had lost at Detroit; and from which some of the escaped British soldiers had fled seventy miles through an almost unbroken forest, carrying their alarming report to the very shore of Lake Ontario.

While they talked, Snow Storm had been walking beside them, and as they came to a fork in the road he took Brown Ben's bridle and turned him aside. "But that is not the direct road," exclaimed Mrs. Carter, who thought he had made a mistake.

He nodded toward the one they had just left, "Say white woman no stay — heap trouble that way. Trust Snow Storm."

"We will, Snow Storm, it seems good to have some one we can trust."

On this road the scattered houses were further apart, and for the most part their way lay through tall woods on either side; in the hollows of these a deep silence rested, not a breath of wind stirred the leafless branches, and the huge trunks of the trees cast long shadows on the dazzling white covering of snow. Several times they were forced to stop

to warm, and this with their late start had so delayed them, that when their guide, as dusk began to gather, proposed that they keep on into the evening, Mrs. Carter readily consented. "Moon pretty quick," he had said, "plenty light."

"And it is not as cold as it was. Indeed it is quite comfortable now."

He put up his hand. "Snow," was his laconic comment.

By this time they had passed the house where the last track ended, and the horse was now forced to break his own. Soon the moon came up, the white road before them stretched into a shadowy distance, the tree trunks and snow-laden bushes cast fantastic shadows, a great stillness rested over the world, and save as some little furry creature skurried into sight they alone seemed alive. Lucy and Robby were asleep under the robes, Johnny's head had dropped against Patty's shoulder, Snow Storm was walking ahead and the lines were hanging loose, when as they rounded a curve suddenly something long and dark lay directly across the road before them.

CHAPTER XXII

THE WAYSIDE CAMP

IN a moment they knew that it was a tree fallen across the way, and as suddenly as they had seen the obstruction they came to a stop. "Um, um," Snow Storm grunted to himself, "wonder why no track — know now."

After a careful survey he came back to explain that they could not go around the tree, for the roots were hidden in a dense cedar thicket which stretched far out at one side, while the branches hung over a deep creek on the other. "And will we have to go back all this way?" asked Patty in a tone of almost despair.

Snow Storm walked again to the tree, looked it over critically, "Not very high, horse jump it."

"But we may be upset," protested Mrs. Carter.

"Maybe," he agreed, "try um — go back — stay here all night."

"And is there no other way?"

"No way me see."

"Let us try it, mother," urged Patty, "we can't be much worse off than we are now."

Patty and Johnny, now wide awake, stepped out of the sleigh giving their place to Snow Storm who, gathering up the reins, gave a yell that started Brown Ben into a gallop. At the tree he hesitated slightly, but at a sharp word of command cleared it; the Indian held him back for a moment as the sleigh rising upward rested on the top, so closely poised that a breath, it seemed, would have turned the balance either way, then with hardly a jar it dropped on the soft snow. The barrier had been cleared in safety.

Patty and Johnny scrambled over, and they were quickly on their way again. Patty from her seat in front noticed that they were now hurrying on at a more rapid rate, Snow Storm sometimes leading the horse or breaking the way in advance. Soon, too, she was aware of a gathering darkness, and looking up at the moon now obscured by broken and fast

rising clouds she understood his reason for haste; the more so as she began to catch the roar and rush of a river that she knew by its sound must be both swift and deep. That this must be crossed she was quite certain, but to ask questions of Snow Storm might be thought a lack of confidence, so she said nothing.

The thick and ragged clouds had now blotted out not only the moon but the stars, and in almost total darkness they groped their way along what seemed a narrow, rocky path upon the edge of the river. Then they were going down the steep bank, and soon were out over the river, and with a feeling of dread that was very near fear, Patty looked down on the foaming water as it tumbled along, its white crests flashing even through the darkness. From what little she could see of the bridge she knew that it was an insecure log one, with no side-rail, and though Snow Storm's hand was on the bridle she held the lines firmly, knowing that a false step would plunge them all in.

Hardly had they reached the other side when something soft and cold touched Patty's cheek, and soon the snow was falling around them so thick and fast that she could hardly see

Brown Ben's head or the tall figure of Snow Storm just ahead. They were now following the river in a deep, narrow valley, where the keen wind, risen with the storm, blew in their faces, howling wildly through the bordering trees, and whirling the snow in thick blinding clouds in every direction. To add to their troubles, Brown Ben balled in the freshly fallen snow, floundered, stumbled, and at last fell, and had to have the buckles of his harness unloosened and be helped to his feet.

"Oh, Snow Storm, what shall we do?" exclaimed Mrs. Carter. "We shall all perish in this storm."

"Make camp, horse tired, no go further."

Already, as he spoke, he was turning aside to where a dark stretch of pine trees promised protection, while the steep and heavily wooded bank broke the violence of the storm. Reaching these he began to make his preparations for the night. With the light ax in the sleigh he quickly chopped down a small maple, and cut it into lengths. While he was doing this, by his direction, Johnny with the shovel they had brought with them, and Patty with a big piece of bark stripped from a fallen log had

cleared a square spot of the ground of snow, piling it up on the sides. A fire was the next matter of attention. For this Snow Storm drew from his pocket some pieces of the fibrous bark of the white cedar, which he rubbed to powder, and laying over this first the thin peelings of birch bark, and then some of the bark itself, with the help of his flint and tinder he soon had the little pile in a blaze. As for fuel there was no question, that was on every side. Piling log on log he soon had a great heap whose flame lighted up the trees around and shone far and wide.

“How different the fire makes every thing seem!” said Patty to her mother who now came wading through the snow with Robby in her arms. “And see, the place we have cleared is like a little room in the snow.”

“Wait — not done yet — make roof,” and Snow Storm came toward them dragging a quantity of great cedar branches. These he laid over the snow walls, which were some five feet high, and on which, so cold had been the day, the big fire blazing close at hand made no impression. When the still falling snow had been well shut out he brought other

branches as a carpet for the floor, and over these spread the robes and blankets from the sleigh, now drawn well up under the sheltering pines.

Mrs. Carter had tried to provide for any emergency that might arise, which included a plentiful stock of provision, and she now thawed out corn bread and doughnuts, while Patty toasted slices of salt pork on a forked stick before the fire, and boiled a saucepan of water for tea. "How cozy and comfortable we are!" Patty exclaimed, as sitting around the fire on the robes and logs of wood they ate their supper, with pieces of bark for plates, and two tin cups for the tea, which they shared in turn.

Mrs. Carter smiled, "Yes, it hardly seems possible when I think of the storm outside, and our situation so little while ago. Snow Storm, thee certainly is a wizard to have done it."

A pleased expression at her words of praise lighted the dark face, "Indian learn how, have to do so plenty often."

"And what of Brown Ben, is he comfortable, too?" asked Patty.

"He ought to be," Johnny's voice was drowsy, "I took him to the river to drink, and rubbed him down with some of the straw in the sleigh, an' put his blanket on, an' now he's under a big pine eating oats out of the bag we brought. My but I'm sleepy!" he added stretching his arms.

Lucy was nodding, Mrs. Carter looked down on Robby whose curly head dropped in her lap, "It is the cold, and now the fire heat that makes us all sleepy," she said, gently.

"All lay down," advised Snow Storm, "me watch — keep fire."

"No, no, you must rest as well as the rest of us."

"Uh," he grunted, "me rest plenty."

Very gladly they obeyed him, and with their wraps for covering and their feet to the fire, the Indian way, they slept safe and warm while now and then a white flake came floating down from the storm that raged around them outside.

In the morning when Patty awoke the storm was over, the sun was shining, the fire was blazing and Snow Storm sat beside it wrapped in his blanket and smoking his pipe. A hasty

breakfast was soon made, the sleigh cleaned of snow, Brown Ben harnessed, and they left the snug little camp which had served them so well. Once out of the deep and narrow valley which bordered the river, the wind had swept the snow hard and smooth so that there were few drifts to impede their way. These were quickly shoveled through, and before the morning was far advanced they came to the snug log house by the roadside, "The Wayfarer's Lodge," which their guide had intended to reach the night before.

"You have shown us great kindness, Snow Storm; whenever you want to leave, say so," Mrs. Carter said to him as they were starting on from here after a more substantial meal.

"Not go yet," was his laconic answer.

All that day he kept with them, sometimes riding, but more often walking with his quick elastic tread. As to the road they asked no question; he had bade them trust him, and they were doing so. In the late afternoon they began to have glimpses of a blue expanse of water, and knew they were nearing Lake Ontario, and as the road bent towards it the great lake was before them.

"That is the lake we crossed when we moved to Canada," said Patty, "but that was in the spring, there wasn't any ice around the edge of it then."

Johnny was standing up to look, "I can remember it, and we couldn't see land."

"I can remember it, too," added Lucy, "a man said he was going to throw me overboard, and it scared me."

Then, as the sun was setting, Snow Storm led the way into the grounds surrounding a large two-story house, which stood on a gently sloping elevation with a fine outlook over the lake.

"Oh, Snow Storm!" Patty made protest, "this is not a public house, a tavern."

"Not tavern — no."

"And we could not ask people who live in a style like this to take us in."

But Snow Storm kept on unmoved, "All right — know um," was all the answer he made. "Wait here, I come back," he commanded as they reached the point where the drive turned toward large and well-built stables, and with that he walked swiftly around the house, out of sight.

“What shall we do, mother?” begged Patty.

“We can do nothing,” was the answer. “After all Snow Storm has done for us we cannot refuse to follow his wishes, whatever they may be.”

Hardly had she spoken when he returned, “All right — say come in.”

CHAPTER XXIII

AT BRANT HOUSE

As Snow Storm led the way they followed silently through the outer door into a spacious hall, and from this into a large room, handsomely furnished. As Patty saw at the first glance there was a carpet-covered floor, ornaments on the carved mantel, a long pier glass, mahogany tables, fashionable chairs; a guitar leaned against the wall, embroidered curtains hung at the windows, and between two of these was a neat hanging bookcase filled with books.

There was no one to ask any questions of, Snow Storm had disappeared, Johnny puckered up his mouth as if to whistle, though he made no sound. "Mother," whispered Patty, "where can we be? This looks like the homes that Margaretta has so often told us of in England."

Mrs. Carter smiled, for not all of her life

had been spent in a clearing in the woods. "It looks to me like the home of a family of wealth and refinement."

"But does no one live here?" questioned Lucy.

"Certainly, my child. There would not be a bright fire unless there was some one in the house."

Almost as she spoke, there was a slight sound, another door opened, and to their astonished vision there entered a charming, noble-looking Indian girl, dressed in a mixture of English and Indian costume. Her hair was confined in a silk net, but the lower tresses, escaping, flowed down on her shoulders. Under a tunic of soft black silk was a petticoat of the same material and color, which came only a little below the knee, while her silk stockings and kid shoes, like the rest of her dress, were black. The grace and dignity of her manner, the style of her dress, so novel and unexpected, filled them all with astonishment and added to the fascinating mystery of the surroundings.

It was but an instant, then Mrs. Carter rose from her seat, "I am afraid we are intruding,

but we have simply obeyed the word of our friend and guide."

The girl smiled, showing white, even teeth. "You are very welcome, I know Snow Storm, he is a Chippewa, but my brother thinks highly of him."

"Thy brother?" Mrs. Carter's tone was one of inquiry. "Thee will pardon me, but we know not where we are, or even who thee may be."

"You are at Brant House, I am Elizabeth Brant, and my brother is John Brant, the Tekarihoga or head chief of the Mohawks and the Six Nations." Her manner was easy and natural, her English perfect. Patty gave a little gasp, the name of John Brant was familiar, her mind went back to the talk of Alson and Lieutenant Wolcott. This then was the home of the young chief who had led the Indian warriors at Queenstown Heights, and who had made the attack on Scott with his flag of truce, and again later as a prisoner: and this also was the daughter of Joseph Brant, of whose savage deeds of cruelty she had heard stories since her earliest childhood.

More than once as she talked with Mrs. Car-

ter the eyes of Elizabeth Brant rested on Patty; now turning to her she asked, "Will you not come nearer the fire? You must be cold with riding so long."

"A little stiff with sitting so long," Patty admitted. "It isn't natural for me to sit still."

Elizabeth Brant smiled, "No, nor for me, either. I had rather walk whenever I can do so than to sit cramped up to ride. And how did you find the roads in your wintry journey?"

"Not so very good, but they are better near the lake."

"Everything is better near the lake." She glanced from the window with its wide view over the water and a soft glow came into her fine dark eyes. "The lake is so much to me, I feel that something has gone out of my life when I am away from it, and I am always glad to come back to it again." And as Patty followed her glance she felt that she understood.

Their wraps had been laid aside and they were comfortably seated around the warm fire, when a squaw wearing a man's hat entered with a tray of dishes, and laid a cloth of fine

white damask on one of the tables, making ready for a meal.

“And does thee live here by thyself since thy brother is away?” asked Mrs. Carter.

“But little. The house has been closed much of the time during the war, but military operations are such that my brother has been here, and will soon be back again.”

Robby's eyes had been fixed on the table, and as the squaw came back with another loaded tray, he pulled his mother's dress. “See, mudder, see!” he whispered eagerly, “supper, eat.”

They all laughed at this, and quickly gathered around the table, where the supper was served in English fashion, and of English cooking. A plentiful meal it was, and quite in contrast to that of the evening before. There was tea, coffee, hot rolls, fresh butter, eggs, smoked beef, ham, and broiled chicken. And to it all with appetites sharpened by the out-of-doors they did ample justice, meanwhile wondering at their strange good-fortune.

Snow Storm, their hostess explained, had gone to see some Indians near, leaving word that he would be back in the morning. And

soon after the meal Mrs. Carter, tired with the long day's ride and glad of the opportunity to rest again in a comfortable bed, went to her room with Robby so sleepy he could hardly walk, and Johnny and Lucy soon followed her example.

"I hope you are not too tired to keep me company a little while," Elizabeth Brant had said as she drew a small sofa before the fire.

"No, indeed," was Patty's truthful answer. "I had forgotten that I felt tired, your home is so beautiful and interesting." She did not dare to add what was in her thought: "and you are the most interesting of all in the home," but it may be that her face expressed it.

Elizabeth Brant looked pleased, "I am glad you like our home. I am fond of it. My father built Brant House, on this land at the head of Lake Ontario, that was presented to him by the King of England: and it was here he lived and died."

"And your mother, is she also dead?"

"No," Elizabeth spoke slowly, her large dark eyes on the burning logs. "But my mother does not like the English ways, she prefers the customs of her own people; and

so, soon after my father's death she returned to the Mohawk Village on Grand River where he is buried, and where she still lives, and always will." She paused and crossed her slim dark hands behind her head. "It is not easy to explain my mother's position, but she has great influence among her people, in Europe I think she would be called a queen. You may not know, but it is a custom of the Mohawks for the inheritance to descend through the female line exclusively, so the oldest woman of what you may call the royal family has the right when the chief dies to name a son or descendant for chief. Only if it is a grandson he must be the child of her daughter. My mother was the oldest daughter of the head chief of the Turtle tribe — first in rank in the Mohawk nation, so when my father, who was the head chief of the Six Nations died, she stood at the head of the Iroquois Confederacy, with the power alone to name his successor, and for this she chose her youngest son, Ahyouwaighs, in Mohawk, at that time only fourteen. He is a true Mohawk, he has led his warriors well, but Brant House is his home."

Patty looked at the richly dressed girl, whose dark beauty fitted so well with the luxury of the room, and the question almost unconsciously sprang from her lips, "Could you be content to live the life of your people, Miss Brant?"

She smiled and shook her head, "I am afraid not. The life of the wigwam is one I have never known. My father was educated in an English school, he had been presented at the English court, his sister was the wife and widow of Sir William Johnson, his associates and many of his friends were among the white people. Why these earrings," touching her ears, "were sent to me through him, by the daughter of the American, Aaron Burr. And so it is that in turn I have been sent to English schools and have lived all my life in English ways. Understand me," she added earnestly, "I am a Mohawk, I am proud of my race, but I must live my own life and that is not the life of my mother. Nor is that the life of my brother. I wish you could see my brother. You would find an accomplished gentleman."

Patty was again recalling the talk of her

brother and Wolcott. "So I have heard. You must have missed him since the war."

"I have indeed, and I shall be glad when he is safe home again. He felt it was his duty to help the English and lead his warriors, but if my father had been living I think it would have been different."

"Your father? Why, he was on the English side in the Revolution," she had almost said, "and massacred the settlers in the Mohawk and Wyoming Valleys," but checked herself in time.

Elizabeth Brant looked at her keenly as if she had read her unspoken thought. "Yes, but the family of Sir William Johnson, all the influence around him was on that side. And one reason, he has said, why he and many of the Indians joined them, was to preserve the lands God had given them and which the British threatened to take away unless they fought on their side. But I have heard him say that he regretted his part in the Revolution, and would never again take up the tomahawk against the Americans.

"I know," still more earnestly, "that there are stories against my father, but I am quite

sure they cannot be true. A poet in England has lately written a dreadful book, 'Gertrude of Wyoming,' and my brother says he will go to England to prove to him how false it is. Why, my father was a religious man! Here is his Prayer Book," and she lifted from the table an English Prayer Book translated into the Mohawk language. "He lies buried beside the Episcopal church which he built, and of which he was a member."

And Patty listening realized as never before that a savage nature may have a gentler side, and that those who had seen but the former might find it difficult to understand that the other had an existence. How much or how little of their own story Snow Storm had told she did not know, but she fancied the whole. Reaching out her hand she took that of Elizabeth Brant, "It is a strange chance that has brought us together. I am glad to have known you. I am glad of what you have told me of your father and brother. They are both brave men, and we admire courage whichever side it is on."

The next morning the squaw in the man's hat again brought in the tray, laid the damask

cloth, and served a breakfast as bountiful as the supper. Soon after Snow Storm made his appearance, and after a regretful parting with their gracious hostess they were once more on their way. Snow Storm kept with them till they had passed well beyond the town of Hamilton. "Military road," with a gesture of the hand, "no more trouble now, good-bye."

Mrs. Carter held out her hand, "Oh, Snow Storm, you have been so kind, how can I ever thank, repay you?"

"No thanks — Anoonk say 'Our friends, go help.' " And he turned away, a chorus of "Good-byes," following him.

There were tears in Patty's eyes, and they sounded in her voice, "I'm so glad we're going back to be really Americans again, but it just breaks my heart to think of the friends we are leaving!"

CHAPTER XXIV

ACROSS THE LINE

ACTING on the advice of Snow Storm, they kept to the road which followed the shore of the lake, instead of attempting to shorten the distance by striking across the country; besides, as they knew that the Americans were now in possession of Fort George, at the mouth of the Niagara River, as well as the north bank of the river, by doing so they would the sooner be under American protection.

The sun was just setting for the last night they were to pass on Canadian soil as they came in sight of the little town of Newark, whose something over two hundred houses spread for more than a mile along the shore of Lake Ontario, while behind the town on the river bank, lifted the walls of Fort George, one of the strongest British posts in Upper Canada. But now floating from its flagstaff

instead of the English cross they saw the American stars and stripes.

As they came in sight of this Patty started to her feet. "Hurrah for the flag!" she cried, "Hurrah for the stars and stripes! Did ever any thing look so good?"

Johnny and Lucy and even little Robby had joined in the cheer, Johnny tossing his squirrel-skin cap till it fell out in the snow. "There, there, children," said Mrs. Carter "'Tis a goodly sight, and one I rejoice to see, but there is no need for thee to go wild."

As she spoke the last rim of the sun sank out of sight, and to the faint sound of a bugle the flag on the fort came slowly down. "How I should hate to see that flag come down before an enemy!" Patty exclaimed. "I hope it may not have to," and why she should have felt a sudden sense of fear she could not have told.

It was early dusk when they reached a tavern. The room they entered was but fitfully lighted by the fire on the hearth. The landlord was talking with a young man whose face as he stood with his back to the fire was in the shadow, but whose dress and manner

impressed Patty as a Canadian gentleman, one accustomed to command, and evidently also a traveler as he stood booted and spurred and with military cloak wrapped round him. As the Carters came in the conversation, whatever it had been, at once stopped. "Well, I must be on my way," said the young man, and tossing down a piece of silver, he added something in so low a tone that she could not catch the words and passed out.

"Oh, yes, you can stay," the landlord answered as Mrs. Carter made her request for lodgings, "I turn no one away from Newark."

"Newark," repeated Patty, whose thought had been on the fort rather than the town, "why this must be the village where the American prisoners were taken after their surrender at Queenstown. And," looking around, "I wonder if this isn't the very house where Brant made the attack on Colonel Scott?"

"You are right, this is the very house," was the reply of the landlord who had now entered with candles. "It was in this parlor the officers were held, in the hall outside their arms were stacked, and in the hall that Brant and

Jacob came so near to killing the American officer. Queer you should have spoken of it; did you notice the young man who went out just after you came in? That was Brant himself."

Patty ran hastily to the window and looked out; the tall erect figure was still in sight down the street, walking with the graceful, easy tread she had so often remarked in connection with the Indians. Then her thought turned to the evening at Brant House, its handsome appointments, the dignity and charm of Elizabeth Brant. And this was her brother, the young Mohawk war-chief, of whom she had spoken with such pride and fondness: seeing him made it but the harder to realize that this dignified gentleman and the furious savage, who had played so different parts under that roof could be one and the same.

"But how does he dare to be here?" she questioned. "I thought the Americans were in possession of Fort George?"

"Oh, yes, they are, at present, but everybody comes and goes, English, Americans, and Indians. Besides those who have only seen John Brant in war paint and feathers

would hardly know him in his civilized manner and dress: and for all he is amiable and kindly in times of peace he can be a tomahawk Indian all right, as the Americans have found, and," he added "may find again."

The Carters had now come to historic ground, as the next day their road led them along the high bluff bordering the river. They were all eager to see the many interesting sights, and busy pointing out the spots they recognized from the descriptions of both Alson and Lieutenant Wolcott.

"That must be Vrooman's Point," and Johnny waved the whip, "where the man wanted to fire on the Americans who were swimming the river."

"I don't see how anybody ever dared to swim it," and Lucy shivered as she looked fearfully down on the swift-dashing, foam-whitened water.

"It wasn't winter then," reminded Johnny. "But see, there's Queenstown Heights; I wonder where it was General Brock was killed? And look, will you, at those cliffs the Americans climbed up!"

"And think," added Patty, "that we are

on the very ground where Alson and Lieutenant Wolcott were that day!"

But there was little time to linger, even for the ice-clad beauty of the wonderful Falls. The nearer they came to the appointed meeting-place with the husband and father the more anxious they were to reach it, the more feverish the dread lest any obstacle intervene. There was, they knew, the British Fort Erie opposite Buffalo, British batteries across the river from Black Rock, British soldiers, sentinels even, were possible, and in the minds of Patty and her mother the unspoken undercurrent of apprehension increased with every mile.

It was late twilight when a straggling cluster of lights on the other side indicated the town of Black Rock. "Dare we go any farther?" asked Patty.

"I think not," answered her mother. "There is a road ahead that seems to lead down to the river. We will try to cross there."

"But what if the ice isn't strong enough?" It was Lucy who voiced the doubt.

"We can only make the trial."

"I should think it'd been cold enough," broke in Johnny, "to freeze any river solid."

Patty glanced fearfully around as they turned down toward the river, but no one was in sight except an old man with red woolen mittens and muffler who was drawing a hand-sled loaded with poles.

"Friend, can thee tell me if the river is frozen so that we can safely cross?" Mrs. Carter asked as they came opposite, and brought Brown Ben to a halt.

He stopped and looked them over with blinking eyes. "What ye want ter get across for?" he snarled.

"It is needful that we should."

"Ye're dommed Yankees, that's what ye are," flinging out the words spitefully, "an' ye're runnin' away from Canada, I bet ye be."

"Patty, drive on."

As they started the old man's voice rose shriller, "I do'no' nothin' 'bout the ice, an' I wouldn't tell ye if I did. The ice ought ter break an' lét ye all through, if I was the ice I would. I wish every dommed Yankee was drowned, I do."

Patty turned around, "You'd better not say

much about water, the British have pretty poor luck when they meet the Yankees there, and they might be the ones to get drowned."

"Patty, Patty!" remonstrated her mother.

"I can't help it, I couldn't stand that."

The old man was clawing the air with his mittens. "I hope every one o' ye'll be drowned," he shouted.

It was not, Patty felt, an especially cheerful speeding on their way, but she only looked at her mother, "We shall have to try it, anyway."

"Yes, we must take the risk, whatever it is; there has been just snow enough this afternoon to cover the trace if any one had been over here." As she spoke she threw back the robes. "John, thee and Lucy and I will walk, that will make the load lighter; Patty can drive and take Robby with her."

"I'm lighter 'n Patty, why can't I drive across?" whined Johnny.

"Because Patty is older, and should any emergency arise she would know better how to meet it. Come, let us lose no time."

They were out of the sleigh at the edge of the river, here half a mile wide, and Patty had

gathered the lines to start again when her mother cautioned, "Be careful, drive slowly, unless thee feels the ice breaking under thee, then make all speed."

"I will," was Patty's answer as she drove out onto the ice, thankful that the screening dusk sheltered them, even though it dimmed the opposite shore. While her mother with Johnny and Lucy took their way at some little distance.

Brown Ben also seemed to understand the need of care; with ears laid back he lifted his feet high and put them down carefully. Now and again there came cracking sounds in the ice that did not add to the tranquillity of either horse or driver, and as they neared the center of the river Patty could distinctly feel the ice bending under them. "Hurry, Brown Ben, hurry!" she urged, while her heart gave a leap which seemed to bring it into her throat. But the horse had felt the yielding and sprang forward to more solid footing. To Patty it was a ride she never forgot, and the half mile seemed to stretch into an interminable length. At last the farther shore was safely reached, and on the edge of the ice she waited for the

others to come up; when they were again in the sleigh they moved on up the edge of the river till they came to a road which led up toward the town.

Hardly a word had been spoken till now,—the sense of suspense had been too great,—but as they reached the land Johnny stood up and waved his cap, “We’re on American soil! We’re Americans now!”

“John,” admonished his mother, “remember we are strangers here: if any one should hear thee, what would they think?”

“Never mind, mother,” Patty’s tone was jubilant, “I think we all feel like shouting too, I know I do.”

“We cannot but rejoice, I know; nor must we forget the gratitude we owe to the Providence that has safely brought us on our way.”

“And is the danger all past now?” quavered Lucy.

“I trust so.”

“And do you think we shall find father?”

Patty could not shake Lucy this time, as she was in front and Lucy sitting behind, besides she was using both hands to drive; at the same time she knew that the question was a most

anxious one in her mother's heart, and she quickly answered, " Give us time to look for father before you ask that. Mother, I think that is a tavern ahead, shall we not stop there? "

CHAPTER XXV.

A FLIGHT AND A JOURNEY

MRS. CARTER was hardly inside the house when she began to make inquiry for her husband. "We couldn't expect to hear of him the very first thing," Patty comforted as she saw the look of disappointment on her mother's face when her questions proved fruitless, trying to keep the fear that was tugging at her own heart from showing in her voice. "Wait till morning, and then we may find him."

But a search of the town the next morning met with no better result. From the beginning of the war, Black Rock had been on the route over which troops and all connected with the army had been passing and repassing, strangers were the rule, and to try to find trace of any particular one was well nigh hopeless. Mrs. Carter, for all her resolute will, was obliged to admit herself unable to go out, and

Patty, who had made the search, felt her heart sink as she walked slowly back to meet the unspoken eagerness of her mother's eyes, and report her fruitless quest.

"But there is no reason to be discouraged," with an assumed cheerfulness she was far from feeling. "We haven't been here a day yet, and when I see how it is and has been, why I don't wonder that it's hard to get trace of any one." Mrs. Carter sighed and Patty felt ready to sit down and cry with disappointment, but that would never answer. Her mother too, was showing sign of the strain of these days on strength and nerve and she felt, as she had so often in these last months, that she must take on her young shoulders every possible burden.

It was a general feeling of depression that Robby shared as well as the others. "I fought you said fadder was here," he fretted. "Where is he? I wants to see fadder. I wants to go home."

His mother brushed away a tear. "Dear child, we haven't any home now. Be patient a little longer."

"Come, Robby," Patty said quickly, "have

on your cloak and cap and Johnny shall take you for a nice walk," and with a mind diverted she watched him as he went away, holding fast to Johnny's hand.

They had been gone an hour or more, Lucy was consoling herself with a friendly kitten, Patty and her mother sat idly by the fire, each busy with her own thoughts, when they were startled by a sudden slamming of doors, an excited tramping in the hall, and Robby burst in shouting at the top of his voice, "I finded him! I finded my fadder! Here he is! Here's fadder!"

"Yes," said Mr. Carter when the first excited joy of the meeting was over, "Robby found me. I hardly thought you would be here yet, but on the possibility I had come up from Fort Niagara — for so many men have gone home, their term of enlistment having expired, that the force along the river is greatly reduced and I have been doing a little military service — when as I was walking along some one caught my coat and before I could look round I heard a voice saying, 'Why fadder, don't you knows me?' Bless his heart,—" tossing the little fellow up, "I guess

'fadder' did know him. Well, thank God, we are together again, and the next thing is to get on to Ohio."

"And you have heard nothing of Alson?" Patty's lips quivered as she put the question.

"Not a word, nor of Lieutenant Wolcott either. But I have no doubt they gained the American side safely as well as myself: and these are times when persons and their affairs are easily lost sight of. Why, Mary, what is the matter?" he cried, and springing forward caught Mrs. Carter who had fainted.

Before light the next morning Patty was awakened by confused sounds in the street outside, shouts, tramping of feet, hurried orders. "What does it mean?" she asked her father as soon as they met.

"It meant for one thing that I am more and more thankful you are all safely here, and for another that the Americans have abandoned Fort George."

"Fort George!" she echoed, "why they were there, I saw the flag, only day before yesterday."

"I know, but last evening Colonel McClure in command, who had only a hundred men

with him, had word that a British force was within ten miles. He must have lost all presence of mind, for at once he set fire to the village of Newark, lying directly under his guns, next he set fire to Queenstown, and leaving his tents and barracks standing in Fort George fled over the river to the village of Niagara, and has sent out a call for re-enforcements. Where they are to come from nobody knows, for there are hardly more than three hundred soldiers left from Fort George to Buffalo."

Patty groaned, "To give up the fort, that was bad enough, but to burn those pretty villages, the homes of the people, that was dreadful! How could any one have done it?"

"Yes, it was a cruel and wicked thing to do, and a most unwise one, for the British will be sure to retaliate."

Patty was silent a moment, "Do you think we shall be safe in Ohio?"

"Yes. Since Perry's glorious victory on Lake Erie, and the final defeat of the British and Indians in the Northwest by Harrison, I am told that Cleveland is far safer than Buffalo."

“ I wish we were there, and that we could start to-day.”

“ I wish so, too, but the doctor says it will be several weeks before your mother will be able to go on: and she must be our first thought.”

“ Dear mother, to be sure she must, She has suffered everything.”

During the day troops began to straggle past, and finally, no re-enforcements coming, Colonel McClure continued his retreat to Buffalo. This was followed by a week of comparative quiet, then came another morning of confusion and alarm. During the night some five hundred British troops crossed the Niagara River, crept up unseen to Fort Niagara, situated opposite Fort George, surprised the sentinels, rushed through the main gate, captured the fort and made its garrison prisoners. No surprise was ever more complete, no resistance ever weaker. Every face Patty looked into was pale, every one had reason to fear, for they well knew that Lewiston, Niagara, and the country for miles round, were now at the mercy of the British to be laid waste and given up to plunder.

If Patty's first feeling was of terror, her mother's was the opposite. "If we had not been here, Ezra, would thee have been in the fort?"

"Doubtless I should."

"Then I am so thankful we are here and thee is safe."

But Patty was by no means sure of this last, and the first time she was alone with her father she put the question, "Are you safe, father, and are any of us safe in this terrible time?"

"I cannot tell, daughter; we can only wait and trust."

Her hands were trembling as she put them round his arm, "But the waiting is the dreadful part of it."

Her father looked at her in surprise, "Why, Patty, I did not know that you were ever afraid."

"I am now, as afraid as Lucy ever was, I can't help the feeling that something terrible is going to happen. I wish we could get away."

"I saw the doctor to-day and he says your mother is not strong enough yet. But we will

go on to Buffalo, and get everything ready to start as soon as she can go with us. And say as little as you can to alarm her."

Patty laughed, "Oh, I am not going to act like a coward even if I do feel like one!"

The change to Buffalo gave them all an added sense of security. The present city was at that time but a new town, only six years old at the beginning of the war: but from its position directly in the line of overland emigration it already numbered over five hundred inhabitants, clustered on a low bluff, a little back from the lake, and also from the marsh which bordered Buffalo Creek, and to the younger Carter children, used to the life of a forest clearing, it seemed a town of importance, and they found an unending amusement in walking about the streets and looking into the windows of the eight stores.

"I wish we were going to live here," Lucy exclaimed one day, and though Patty shivered at the wish she said nothing; true to her promise she kept her fears to herself.

And with the days her fears lessened, her mother was steadily improving, her father was busy in preparations for the journey before

them, all their anticipations were of this. Another party of travelers had been found who would join company with them, and it was to a cheery family group that Mr. Carter entered. "Well," he announced, "I think I have everything ready. Brown Ben and the horse I have bought to do duty with him have just been shod, the things we are to take with us are all bought and packed."

"And I am strong enough," added Mrs. Carter.

"Which is best of it all. Two days more and it will be New Year's, and I have suggested to Mr. Hall that we then make the start for our new homes."

"If we are ready, why can't we start now?" asked Patty.

"The Halls want to spend a day or two with some friends five miles out. Their team is there now, and I have promised to take them out this afternoon."

Patty looked at her mother. "Why can not mother go too?" she suggested. "That would give her a little rest to begin with."

"I believe that would be a good idea," agreed Mr. Carter, "and they have already

asked us to come. There isn't room for you all with the Halls, but we can take Johnny and Robby, and Patty, you can stay here with Lucy till to-morrow, and I will come back for you."

So it was arranged, and as Patty watched them away it was with a queer sinking of the heart, a forsaken sense of weakness that she could hardly have explained. "How foolish I am!" she told herself, "when the separation is for so little while," and she shut the door and talked with Lucy of what they would do in Ohio.

That same strange feeling kept Patty unusually wakeful, and it seemed to her that she had but just fallen asleep when an insistent sound thrust itself into her consciousness. She started up, half awake, not sure but she was dreaming. Then it came again, closer louder, and sleep was far away. For it was a cry, hoarse and wild with fear that rang out, "Fly! fly for your lives, the British and Indians are coming!"

Patty dashed open the window and heard some one below asking, "How do you know? Where are they?"

"They have fired Black Rock. It's burning now! They are right here, to burn, to kill! Fly for your lives!" and he sped on to carry his warning.

Leaning from her window Patty could see the light on the sky that proved his words to be too true. Then a nearer light shot up, and there came the sound of a cry that was not a warning.

"What is it?" came a terrified whisper from Lucy.

"British and Indians. Dress as quickly as you can."

"Oh, let's run, not wait to dress!"

"No," Patty's tone was firm, "it is cold out of doors and you would freeze. Here are your shoes, tie on your hood tight." Hastily roping on their clothes they hurried down into the street, where people were running and shouting, some trying to carry their most valuable possessions, others wringing their hands and crying. A woman caught Patty by the shoulder, saying excitedly, "This way! By going down the river on the ice we may reach the fort at Black Rock."

"No, no," Patty held Lucy back, "that

would take us farther from father and mother, we must go the other way."

"Oh, if they were only here!" sobbed Lucy.

"I'm thankful they're not here, now; whatever happens to us they at least are safe."

Flames were now shooting up from the houses near, and the terrible Indian war-whoop rang out close at hand. Lucy stopped, her hand on her heart, "Oh, Patty, I shall faint, I know I shall! Don't leave me."

Patty almost groaned; every moment was precious. "If you faint I shall leave you," she answered, "and the Indians will kill you and scalp you. You don't want that do you?"

"No, no!"

"Then come with me quick. Make no noise!" and catching Lucy's hand she hurried her along the street.

It was a night that those who were fated to pass through never forgot, with darkness broken by the lurid flames of the burning houses, the frightened cries on every side, the volleys of musketry, the blood-curdling war-whoops of the Indians, and the scream that told of some victim sinking before their savage tomahawk. Once some dark forms crossed

the street before them, and Patty hardly daring breathe, shrank closely against the wall of the house as they were passing, tightening her hold on Lucy.

"Where are you going?" panted Lucy when they had reached the edge of the town.

"To the creek, but hush, don't make a sound, they may be after us!" and with a quick look around to be certain that they were not pursued, the two girls hurried across the open ground, now lighted by the mounting flames behind, and plunged into the tangled shrubs and trees, that bordered the low and marshy banks of Buffalo Creek. Once on the edge of the winding stream, and partially hidden, they paused to take breath, not with a feeling of security but only of less imminent danger, and then hastened on again.

"Patty, don't go so fast," Lucy panted, "I can't keep up with you!"

Patty halted in perplexity, "We must hurry, Lucy," she urged, "for a long way yet. But take off your knit scarf, put it around my waist, there now give me the ends," and drawing them around her she started again, with part of Lucy's weight added to her own

as they stumbled hastily onward through the snow, their steps quickened by the shots and cries that still reached their ears.

When Patty felt that they were far enough away to venture she left the creek and struck across the open fields. "Where are you going?" Lucy questioned.

"To Wilson's, where father and mother are."

"But that is five miles."

"I know, but we must reach them. Rest a little and you can go better."

At last Lucy sank down with a little moan, "Patty, I can't go any farther, not if they come and kill me."

Patty stopped to think. Morning had come but it was bitter cold, and if Lucy were left in her exhausted condition she might freeze before she herself could summon aid. "Stand up a moment," and she lifted Lucy to her feet; "stand up on that little hillock, put your arms around my neck. Now hold on tight," and stooping she lifted Lucy to her back and staggered on with her burden.

How far she carried Lucy she could not have told; at times it seemed that she could

no longer, that she too must drop down in the snow, but Lucy's life as well as her own was at stake, and she tried to rouse herself and struggle on. Gradually, however, her steps grew slower, her breath came in gasps, everything around her was growing far off and indistinct, when she heard a call and looking up saw her father coming down the road toward her. With the morning he had seen the smoke clouds hanging over Buffalo and in alarm had started to learn their meaning.

"Let us get away, quick," she had urged when she had told her story.

Her father looked in her strained face, saying, "But you must rest first."

"No, I never can rest till we are away." So she thought, but an hour later, wrapped in blankets and brooded over by her mother, she, too, was sleeping the sleep of exhaustion.

The next morning the Carters resumed their journey, leaving the whole American side of the Niagara River behind them a ruined country, with a — for the time being — well-nigh despairing people.

"Oh, father," Patty had asked, "what will the end be?"

“It will end in peace, daughter. This is to be a great and prosperous nation, and we are going to do our little part to make it so.”

The rest of their journey though often tiresome was uneventful, and in time their eyes were greeted by the welcome sight of the little town of Cleveland, scattered along the bluff above Lake Erie.

CHAPTER XXVI

A REUNITED FAMILY

HERE again disappointment awaited them. Uncle James and his family were among those who had left during the time when it was feared Cleveland would be attacked by the British and Indians; and, still greater disappointment, of Alson there was no trace. This was not so strange, Cleveland was a frontier town, there had been the coming and going of troops, strangers were continually passing through to find new homes, and a strange young man could easily come and go without attracting notice.

"He may not have expected us so soon," reasoned Mr. Carter. "He could not know that we had been driven from Canada."

"And because we found you so quickly, father, we must not expect to find Alson as easily," added Patty.

The first thing that confronted them was

to find a place to live. A vacant log house was soon found, the few furnishings they had brought with them put into it, and though simple and rude they had once more a home. This done, the search for Alson was resumed. One thing they knew, that wherever Alson was he would not be idle, and as soon as it was certain that he was not in the town Mr. Carter extended his inquiry. Again and again he was told of some one who answered the description, and Patty with high hopes watched her father go away to seek him, and sadly saw him return alone with the oft repeated story, "No, it wasn't Alson."

For all these disappointments, and their keen anxiety as to the safety of their son, Mr. and Mrs. Carter were happy in that they were united again, Lucy and Johnny had begun school, and were finding in that a new and absorbing interest, Robby was fascinated with playmates of his own age. Of all the family Patty was the only one still heart-sick.

One morning Mr. Carter came in to tell of a rumor he had just heard of two young men at work clearing land some five miles away. "It's only a chance," he had said,

"but I'm going out to have a look at them."

"Oh, father, let me go with you!" Patty begged, moved by a sudden impulse. "It is such a pleasant day I shall enjoy the ride at any rate, and just think how we shall feel if it is Alson!"

"Now, Patty," implored her mother, "don't set thy heart on its being Alson. Thee knows how many times already we have been disappointed."

"I know, but we want to keep hoping. You will take me, won't you, father?"

"To be sure, only as your mother says, don't expect too much."

It was a perfect winter day, the sky was without a cloud, the sun shone brightly, and after the rigor of the Canadian winters the air seemed mild. Looking up at the leafless trees under which they passed, Patty fancied that already she could see the swelling of the leaf buds, the promise of the spring, and out beyond, across the wide ice barrier that fringed the shore the water of the lake sparkled, a reflection of the sky. "How pleasant it all is!" she exclaimed. "And how good it seems to be where every one is

friendly and there is nothing to dread or fear! If we could only find Alson, or know that he was alive and safe I should be so happy!"

At the same time in her heart she was saying, "Two young men—I was sure there would be two. Oh, if it should be—" and there she checked her thoughts with a blush.

Presently Mr. Carter began to look around, "We must be near the place, if I was directed right." Soon he stopped again and bent his head, "Listen, I think I hear the sound of some one chopping. Don't you?"

Patty listened, and fancied she heard a sound, but she was not sure but that it was the excited beating of her own heart.

They drove a little farther and paused again, when Mr. Carter's face brightened. "I hear them plainly now, and, Patty, that sounds like the ring of Alson's ax."

"Do not all axes sound alike?"

"No indeed, and I always noticed the quick and even ring to Alson's ax."

A strip of wood hid the choppers from view though the sound of them was plain. As her father hastily fastened the horses to a sapling, Patty sprang to the ground and ran through

the trees. At the edge of the cleared space she stopped, her color and breath coming and going, her hands pressed tight to her heart. Only one chopper was in sight and his back was toward her; as his ax struck the tree on which he was working he swung partly round and she gave a joyful cry, "Oh Alson! Alson!"

A moment he paused almost in bewilderment, then his ax fell to the ground and he leaped over the fallen trees toward her. "Patty! why, Patty, can it be you? And father?" as the latter came into sight.

Patty was clinging to him laughing and crying, "I felt that it would be you, Alson; that it must be you."

"And have you been looking for me? When did you come? And I never knew that you were here!"

Patty was smiling now, "I thought we had been here a great while, but now that we have found you I guess it hasn't been so very long."

"And where have you been?" asked his father.

"In different places. After Wolcott and I

had made our way through to the American line we came on to Erie, and stayed there and helped towards getting Perry's little fleet ready. We had hardly reached Cleveland when there came news of his victory, so we pushed ahead, joined the army under General Harrison, and had a share in the battle of the Thames, when we won back all that Hull had lost, and more. From there we took the back track again to Cleveland, and having your coming in mind — though I had no idea when it would be, I bargained for this land, and we were clearing a place to build a house. Do you think you will like it?"

His father had been making a critical survey, "Yes, I think you have chosen well."

"And see," cried Patty, "what a fine outlook over the lake, and that little clear creek running down, I'm sure we shall like it."

"And after I had to leave Canada your mother sold the place so we have money to make another start."

"That's good. Then I will take the land adjoining this for myself. I tell you father, Cleveland will be a city some day: and this is a land of opportunity."

"I think you are right, but did you say Wolcott was with you?" Patty had been longing to ask the question, but her lips could not.

"Why yes," answered Alson, "he's the one you hear chopping. Go and surprise him. father."

Patty had seated herself on a fallen tree, and as Mr. Carter left them Alson sat down beside her. "It seems almost too good to be true that we are together again. And now tell me about Canada."

Patty laughed, "You mean about one family in Canada?"

"Exactly that."

"At the last they were the only friends we had left there, and though Charles and Ermina tried never to show it, I could see that the fact of our being Americans made a difference even with them; but Margareta was always just the same."

"I hope I shall find her so."

"Then you are going back?"

"If I live, yes."

"Well if you do not go for ten years you will find her unchanged."

"I trust I sha'n't have to wait so long."

"But changes are coming to the others."

"How is that?"

"Oliver has a commission now in the regular Canadian army, so he will never come back to the farm, Ermina is to be married in the spring and go to Montreal, which will leave Charles and Margaretta alone, and the family who have bought our old home have a daughter who, if I am not greatly mistaken will one day go across the lake to live. Oh yes, and Uncle Theobald and the 'Major Widow' are talking of going to England for a visit."

"They have all been good friends to us, I wish them every joy."

Patty was looking at the toe of her shoe, "And so you and Lieutenant Wolcott have been together all this time?"

"Yes, he had a foolish fancy that a certain person saved his life, and if he kept close to that person's brother he would see her again. But there he and father come now."

"Father," he called as they came nearer, "I want you to see where will be the best place for the house," and he hurried away leaving Patty, who had risen, standing alone.

Her face was still rosy from Alson's speech, the little rings of brown hair escaping from her hood were blown about her forehead, and her eyes under their down dropping lashes were starry with a happy light. "Do you know," asked Wolcott as he stood before her, "what I was thinking of? It was of the first time I saw you. It was on a bright winter day, much like this that you came into my life. You wore a red cloak and hood, and as you looked up at me, almost ready to despair, I thought your face was like the face of an angel."

She laughed, "You know by this time that I'm not an angel."

"No, not an angel, but better for this world than an angel would be."

Patty felt that she must change the current of talk, "Alson tells me that you and he have been soldiers," catching at the first thought that came.

"Yes, I found that my regiment was way down on the St. Lawrence, and my time of enlistment had expired, so I came with Alson, and as he has told you it ended by our joining the Army of the Northwest. When spring

opens I hope to join the army again and do my little share toward bringing the war to an end. Then I hope to make Cleveland my home, and when that time comes will you let me tell the story, ask the question that you wouldn't listen to in Canada?"

Patty was looking off over the lake. "One can hardly promise so far ahead, perhaps," she answered indifferently. Then for the sake of diversion she asked, "Where do you think you will go next?"

"Down on the Niagara frontier. I want to be one towards wiping out the disgrace the American arms have suffered there."

As he spoke, there came to Patty a remembrance of what she herself had passed through, so vivid that it seemed before her again. "No, no," and she caught his arm, "Not there, oh, not there!"

"And why not there?" he asked in wonder.

"Oh, I was in Buffalo when the British and Indians surprised and burned it. I heard those awful war-whoops — I wake up nights hearing them yet — I saw the houses all on fire, I heard the cries of those who were shot or tomahawked, and I ran and ran till I

thought I should die to escape from it. Think of all the Americans have endured and suffered along the Niagara frontier! Don't go there!"

"But those defeats must be wiped out," he answered, "as they assuredly will be. And surely you want me to serve my country."

"Yes, I—I suppose so. But I know more what war means than I did, the danger that it is, and may be the death," her voice dropped with the last word.

"I, too, know what war is, I have faced its dangers unharmed; and when I go out again I shall go with new strength. For, Patty, as you already know the story I would tell you, I think I need not ask the question."

For a moment she looked startled, then with a realization of her secret's revelation, her face grew rosy, then dimpled into a smile. "Perhaps—I—I guess not," she admitted.

Before them lay the lake across which they should yet see the white sails of peaceful fleets, around them the sunny air was full of promise, of dawning springtime, of springing hopes, of glad possibilities; life was young and new and fair, and they were a part of it.

There was a sound of voices, Alson and his father were returning. "Come, Wolcott," called Mr. Carter, "we are going home now. There are others there who will want to see your faces."

"Shall I, Patty?" he asked holding out his hand.

Shyly she slipped her hand in his, "Yes, come."

THE END



